

DESTINATION REPORT

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YOUR TRAVEL SNAPSHOT: Destinations included in this guide

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

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DESTINATION GUIDE

Dubai, United Arab Emirates



INTRODUCTION

Epitomizing an oil-rich sheikhdom isn't a bad life, but what Dubai really wants is to entertain visitors.

Dubai's tourism appeal includes big-time horse races and sporting events, a monthlong shopping festival and a skyline that commands the attention of visitors—not to mention such fascinating hotels as Dubai's own Burj Al Arab and the world's tallest building, the frighteningly towering Burj Khalifa. For jaded, been-there-done-that tourists, this metropolis on the Persian Gulf can throw in camel racing, sandboarding, sand skiing, ice-skating, snow skiing and unique cultural activities.

Dubai's rapid transformation has left it with a slice of old Arabia and a chunk of modern infrastructure. You'll find souks selling gold jewelry and traditional wares not far from modern shopping centers selling electronics and luxury items. Visitors will also see wind towers and minarets rising up from old neighborhoods, dwarfed in turn by office and hotel towers. A new stream of building projects is emerging steadily, making the city an experience not to be forgotten.

But the biggest contrast can be seen in Dubai's landscape: A splendid coastline and beaches are backed by an expansive desert, which in itself is a magnificent paradox of impressive sand dunes and starkly beautiful mountains.

MUST SEE OR DO

Sights—The towering Burj Khalifa and surrounding downtown area, complete with the record-breaking Dubai Fountain; traditional buildings in the Al Fahidi District (formerly the Bastakiya Quarter); striking architecture in the Madinat Jumeirah; the Gold Souk; the Jumeirah Mosque lit up at night; the desert on a four-wheel-drive tour (desert safari); Burj Al Arab.

Museums—History and culture at the Dubai Museum; Sheikh Saeed Al Maktoum House; Dubai Heritage and Diving Village; Miraj Islamic Art Centre.

Memorable Meals—An Italian evening meal under the stars at the beachside Bussola; a spread of Lebanese meze at Bastakiah Nights, in one of the oldest buildings in town; a taste of Britain in the Rivington Grill, overlooking the breathtaking Dubai Fountain; a seafood feast in the glow of the Burj Al Arab at Pierchic; a dinner cruise on the elegant glass-crafted vessel *Bateaux Dubai*.

Late Night—Dancing until early morning at Chi the Lodge; mixing bar, club and beach at Barasti Bar; filling up on freshly baked Arabic pastries at the 24-hour bakery Al Reef; camping in the desert under the stars in a traditional Bedouin tent.

Walks—An evening stroll along the Jumeirah Corniche; people-watching along the Creek; strolling through the souks and malls; a pleasant meander past the coffee drinkers along the JBR walk; taking in the art, the fountain and architecture in Downtown Dubai along Emaar Boulevard; hiking in the Hajar Mountains.

Especially for Kids—The Palm's Aquaventure or Wild Wadi Water Park for an adrenalin-pumping splash; Sega Republic and Kidzania at The Dubai Mall; riding go-karts at Dubai Autodrome; cycling around Creekside Park; SkiDubai snow center at The Mall of the Emirates.

GEOGRAPHY

Dubai is the capital of the emirate of Dubai, the second-largest emirate in the United Arab Emirates. The city is divided by a large creek, Khor Dubai, which is a natural inlet from the Persian Gulf. Residents simply refer to the Khor Dubai as "the Creek." On the north side of the Creek is Deira, and on the south is Bur Dubai. Although in the city's early days Deira was the smartest, fastest-growing part of town, it has now been outstripped by frantic development on the Bur Dubai side, leaving it with the older, more down-at-heel parts of the city. Bur Dubai has expanded to such an enormous extent that its farthest reaches, from the edge of Jumeirah to Dubai Marina, are

now referred to locally as "New Dubai."

Three main roads run parallel through the city: Jumeirah Road (or Beach Road) runs along the coast, Al Wasl Road through the center and Sheikh Zayed Road farther inland. Mankhool, Karama and Satwa are neighborhoods near the center of town. Jumeirah, a residential area popular with Western expats, is in the south, along the coast. Beyond that is Umm Suqeim. These areas are all on the south, or Bur Dubai, side of the Creek. Traveling on Sheikh Zayed Road farther on from Umm Suqeim and after the mass of residential towers that is Dubai Marina leads to Jebel Ali Free Zone. A 12-lane bridge and a floating bridge over Dubai Creek help with traffic flow.

The Jebel Ali Port shares the large volume of traffic with Port Rashid in central Dubai. This is all part of New Dubai, and both population and commerce are spreading outward from the busy central city.

Although Dubai has now started to implement street names, this wasn't always the case. People still tend to give directions based on landmarks. For instance, a likely address for a shop might be "Al Wasl Plaza, near Defence Roundabout, by the Union Bank opposite Spinneys supermarket." Adding to the confusion is the fact that place names translated from Arabic often have a couple of different spellings in English. To ease traffic congestion and improve the road system, the U.A.E. government has installed a Smart Traffic System, said to be the first of its kind in the world, using the latest technology and most advanced specifications. The installation of sophisticated devices can calculate traffic volume, and electronic screens will inform road users accordingly as well as bring attention to road accidents and mishaps along the way.

The area immediately surrounding Dubai is mostly flat desert. The Hajar Mountains are east of the city, and farther to the south is a great desert of sand dunes.

HISTORY

Until the 1800s, Dubai was a quiet settlement, and its people survived on fishing, pearl diving and agriculture. In the 1830s, it was taken over by the Bani Yas tribe led by the Maktoum family (which still rules the emirate). When Sheikh Maktoum bin Hasher Al Maktoum, who was ruler at the time, granted tax concessions to foreign traders, development began, and a trading empire grew, based on gold, silver, spices and pearls. A mix of Arab, Persian and Indian traders settled in the growing town and established Dubai's position as a serious trading center.

The importance of Dubai's large creek as a natural harbor was recognized, and the city began to specialize in the import and export of goods. Dubai and its neighboring emirates accepted the protection of the British in 1892, and the region became known as The Trucial Coast (or Trucial States) among Europeans.

The discovery of oil in Dubai in 1966 led to improvements in the city's infrastructure, as well as to the education, housing and health care of its citizens. In 1968, Britain announced it would withdraw from the region. The various ruling sheikhs recognized that they would be a more powerful force if they united. In 1971, the British departed and the federation of the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) was formed.

Though oil has been crucial to Dubai's development since the late 1960s, trade has always been a cornerstone of the nation's economy, which picked up speed in the 1970s and 1980s with the advent of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the construction of major ports in the city. In the 1990s, Dubai invested heavily in the tourist industry, building dozens of new five-star hotels and resorts, and unleashing a massive marketing campaign that brought millions of tourist dollars flooding into the city.

Since the late 1990s, a huge property boom—fueled in part by the announcement that expats were allowed to invest in real estate—has led to unprecedented levels of development. Flagship projects such as the Dubai Palms and The World (man-made islands and land masses) keep investment levels high, allowing Dubai the option of relying on the real estate market when the U.A.E.'s oil money eventually runs dry.

Politically speaking, Dubai and the U.A.E. have been models of stability in a deeply unsettled region. The U.A.E. went into mourning in late 2004 with the death of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the founding father of the nation and president of the U.A.E. The accession of his son, Sheikh Khalifa, took place smoothly, maintaining the stable status quo at a federal level. In Dubai itself, U.A.E. Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum continues to push the city toward yet greater levels of ambition, and despite his absolute rule (the U.A.E. is the only nation in the region not to have introduced democratic representation at

any level of government) he continues to enjoy high levels of popularity.

POTPOURRI

The U.A.E. is the world's biggest exporter of dates, so be sure to try some while you're in Dubai, and buy some to take home with you.

Dubai has banned the traditional use of child jockeys in camel racing. Instead of relinquishing the sport completely, however, a new solution has been introduced: robot riders. Visitors can now watch the surreal spectacle of camels ridden by state-of-the-art electronic jockeys, controlled by their owners via remote control.

Need some gold in a hurry? In Dubai you do not need to wait until the shops open; instead, you can draw gold bars and coins in various designs and weights in a handy ATM. Gold vending machines can be found in Dubai Mall, Atlantis The Palm and at Souk Madinat.

The world's tallest tower, the Burj Khalifa, was all set to be called the Burj Dubai. But when it officially opened in January 2010, at the very last minute it was announced that it was going to be called Burj Khalifa in honor of the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi who had helped Dubai pay off some of its debts.

If you are flying first class from Dubai don't be surprised if you have a falcon in the seat next to you. Although it is becoming more rare, falcons are valued and are valuable parts of many traditional families. As such, they are allowed to fly in the cabin of most regional airlines.

Dubai is swirling with superlatives. Be sure to check out places such as the world's largest manmade island, the Palm Jumeirah; the world's only seven star hotel, Burj Al Arab and the largest dancing fountains by the Dubai Mall.

LOCATION

The Dubai Cruise Terminal is located at Port Rashid, a 15-minute drive from the center of the city. The terminal has been widely praised for its ultramodern design and extensive facilities, including golf carts for the transport of passengers with disabilities, palm-tree gardens, regular cultural exhibits, a currency exchange, ATM, post office and a tourist-information center. Passengers disembarking at the terminal can use the Internet, shop in the duty-free area and eat in the pleasant cafe before being whisked into town by taxi.

Although the original cruise terminal opened in 2001 with the docking of Cunard's QE2, the current terminal was officially inaugurated in February 2010 by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum. The terminal's capacity since opening has been steadily enlarged and can now handle up to seven cruise ships at one time. By 2016, Dubai expects the number of cruise passengers to reach 450,000 with new cruise liners coming to the region.

SHORE EXCURSIONS

Cruise passengers typically have a variety of shore-excursion choices, including shopping, activity and cultural tours.

Shopping tours include trips to The Dubai Mall, Mall of the Emirates, the Gold Souk and the Spice Souk.

Activity tours focus either on the shore or the desert, offering Jet Skiing, windsurfing and diving, or sandboarding, dune buggying, camel rides and a desert safari in a 4x4 to visit a re-creation of a traditional Bedouin campsite, finishing with an Arabic buffet and belly dance.

Cultural tours include Bastakiya and Shindagha, two pockets of old Dubai with a high proportion of the city's museums and galleries, and perhaps a cruise along the Creek in either a traditional *abra* or dhow boat.

SIGHTSEEING

Because Dubai is such a young city, sightseeing opportunities in the classic sense are few. There's plenty of stunning modern architecture, but in terms of historical and traditional attractions, apart from Jumeirah Mosque (the only mosque in the city open to non-Muslims), there are only two locations of interest—Al Fahidi (previously known as Bastakiya) and Shindagha, both located by the Creek.

The Al Fahidi District is composed of century-old buildings made from coral and topped with wind towers (the U.A.E.'s early form of air-conditioning). This area has a cultural center, The Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding, and is home to two small galleries, both worth visiting: the Majlis Art Gallery and the XVA Gallery, a wonderful Arabian house considered one of the top contemporary art galleries in the Middle East. There's also the stunning Arabian Tea House, formerly the Basta Art Cafe. Just down the road you'll find the Dubai Museum, housed in an old fort and offering a good overview of the city's history, complete with a treasure trove of architectural finds and some worthy re-creations of pre-oil Dubai.

In Shindagha, there's the limited but worthy Sheikh Saeed Al Maktoum House, the former residence of the father of modern Dubai, which is now the al Shindagha Museum. Much more interesting is the Heritage Village, where you'll find camels, displays of local handicrafts and a small tourist market. On most nights, and especially colorful during the Ramadan season, the Village also celebrates U.A.E. music, dancing and local dishes in a bazaarlike atmosphere.

Connecting Al Fahidi and Shindagha is Khor Dubai, the broad, winding Creek. Merchants load and unload old dhows lined up along the wharves, and Armani-clad businesspeople pass by while conducting business on cell phones. You can lunch or walk along the waterside or enjoy the sights by hiring an *abra* from the wharf next to Bastakiya Mosque. It costs 50 AED per trip or 100 AED per hour to cruise along the Creek.

After you've checked out the older pockets of town, take time to marvel at Dubai's modern and ever-expanding skyline, which reveals the city's enthusiasm for outlandish architecture. The world's tallest building is the Burj Khalifa, set beside the vast Dubai Mall (which claims several world records itself) and Souk Al-Bahar, a charming Arabian-themed souk packed with restaurants. In front of the Burj Khalifa, and within great viewing distance of Souk Al-Bahar's eateries, lies the Dubai Fountain (another world's biggest), which puts on impressive watery displays to music each evening.

The Burj Al Arab hotel tower, in the shape of a large sail, is also a remarkable sight. The neighboring Madinat Jumeirah, an enormous resort complex, features traditional wind-tower architecture brought up-to-date with a modern, multistory design and a beautiful network of canals. In the same vicinity is The One&Only Royal Mirage, which transcends reality into the fairytale world of the *Arabian Nights*.

Once you're acquainted with the city, a trip into the desert is a must. Several local tour operators offer excursions, ranging from camel rides to sand skiing to dune-buggy trips, often ending with an Arabic buffet under the stars. If you have the time and the inclination, and the weather is right, we recommend an overnight camping trip.

HISTORIC SITES

Burj Al Arab

Part of the international hotel chain Jumeirah, this sail-shaped hotel is one of Dubai's most striking landmarks. Situated on an artificial island and spectacularly lit at night, it's an impressive sight. Although it may not be to everyone's taste, the hotel's interior is worth seeing for its sheer size and opulent design. Nonhotel guests can only visit if they have reservations at one of the hotel's restaurants. Reservations recommended. Jumeirah Beach, Umm Suqeim, Dubai. Phone 04-301-7777.
<http://www.jumeirah.com/en/hotels-resorts/dubai/burj-al-arab>.

See & Do: Sightseeing

Burj Khalifa

The Burj Khalifa is the world's tallest building and a feat in statistics: At 2,717 ft/828 m tall, it has 160 floors, and the top of the tower can be seen from some 59 mi/95 km away. More than 12,000 workers and contractors built the tower; it has 57 elevators, including two double-decker elevators serving two floors at a time. The empty building weighs 500,000 tons and there are 28,601 individually crafted glass panels covering the tower and its annexes. Excavation began in January 2004, in January 2007 the 100th floor was reached, and since July 2007 the Burj Khalifa has been the tallest freestanding structure in the world. You can visit the observation deck on the 124th floor and look at tiny Dubai at your feet. If you can, book tickets ahead of time, as it reduces the price from 400 AED to 100 AED per person. 1 Emaar Blvd., Downtown Dubai, Dubai. Phone 04-888-8888. <http://www.burjkhalifa.ae>.

Dhow Building Yard

This yard where dhows are built is a good place to get a feel for Dubai's past. Along Khor Dubai (south of the Al Garhoud Bridge), Bur Dubai, Dubai.

Iranian Mosque

Tiny blue mosaic tiles adorn the domes, arches and pillars of this mosque, and it stands directly opposite the Iranian Hospital, which is decorated the same way; the effect of these landmarks is stunning. Unfortunately, non-Muslims can't enter the mosque, but they are welcome to stroll the grounds and admire the intricate artwork and design. Al Wasl Road, Satwa, Dubai.

Jumeirah Mosque

Arguably Dubai's most beautiful building, especially when it's lit at night. The mosque is an excellent example of modern Islamic architecture, with minarets, arches and intricately carved and sculpted detail. Tours of the mosque are conducted on Saturday, Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday 10-11:15 am. Donations are accepted. Individuals can reserve a spot if they arrive by 9:45 am. For group bookings, reserve by phone; group sessions are conducted on Monday and Wednesday. Contact the Sheikh Mohammed Center for Cultural Understanding (Beach Center, Jumeirah Beach Road; phone 04-353-6666; <http://www.cultures.ae>). As this is a place of worship, visitors are expected to dress in a way that covers their head, shoulders, arms and legs while inside the mosque. Women are given coverings for the body and head if they go unprepared. Daily 9 am-5 pm. 10 AED per person. Jumeirah Road (across from the Palm Strip Shopping Plaza), Jumeirah, Dubai. <http://cultures.ae>.

Madinat Jumeirah

No visit to Dubai is complete without a visit to this huge yet lovely development, located at Jumeirah Beach next to the Burj Al Arab. Although Madinat Jumeirah is pitched as a boutique resort, it is anything but small. It consists of three hotels—Mina A'Salam, Al Qasr and Dar Al Masyaf—75 shops, 22 waterfront cafes, 20 restaurants and bars, a theater, an amphitheater, a spa and the three-floor Trilogy nightclub. The extravagant Arabic architecture stretches along a private beach for 0.6 mi/1 km, and *abras* transport hotel guests through a maze of canals. Imagine a mini-Venice of man-made waterways connecting the various buildings and restaurants in this incredible establishment. With the seafront running parallel, it is an amazing sight. Stroll next door to the Madinat Souk, a re-creation of a typical Arabian marketplace, although in posh, air-conditioned comfort. Then dine at one of the many splendid restaurants along the waterways. Jumeirah Beach Road, Jumeirah, Dubai. Phone 04-366-8888. <http://www.jumeirah.com/en/hotels-resorts/dubai/madinat-jumeirah>.

MUSEUMS

Dubai Heritage and Diving Village

This complex addresses Dubai's maritime history and pearl-diving traditions. There's a life-size replica of a dhow in the Diving Village, and the Heritage Center has artifacts and cultural displays. Tour guides available. On weekends, evenings and during the month of Ramadan, there are cultural shows of singing and dancing, and local goodies and traditional foods are available. Saturday-Thursday 8:30 am-10:30 pm, Friday 3-11 pm. Free. Al Shindagha Road (near the Al Shindagha Tunnel), Bur Dubai, Dubai. Phone 04-393-7151. http://www.emirates.com/english/destinations_offers/discoverdubai/sightseeingindubai/heritageanddivingvillage.asp

Dubai Museum

Housed in the carefully restored Al Faheidi Fort, this is a lively interactive museum with working models and life-size displays portraying various aspects of Dubai life: a bustling market, an Islamic school, the desert at night and sea life in the Gulf. A guide is available to give you a free tour of the museum. Saturday-Thursday 8:30 am-8:30 pm, Friday 2:30-8:30 pm. 3 AED adults, 1 AED children age 10 and younger. Al Faheidi Fort (near the Al Fahidi District), Bur Dubai, Dubai. Phone 04-353-1862.

<http://www.dubaiculture.ae/en/LiveOurHeritage/DubaiHeritageSite/Museum/Pages/dubaimuseum.aspx#.U0cXzKIrBc>

Emirates NBD Pearl Museum

One of Dubai's best-kept secrets is the Pearl Museum housed in Emirates Bank. Open only by appointment, it is worth a trip to explore the history of Dubai and its pearl divers, and to see the valuable and shimmering "drops of the ocean" in their true splendor. They were donated by Sultan Al Owais from his private collection. Beniyas Street, Deira, Dubai. Phone 04-800-456. <http://www.pearlmuseum.ae>.

Miraj Islamic Art Centre

This is an exquisite collaboration of museum and art gallery, a showcase of Middle Eastern antiques and a gallery selling the work of artists and craftsmen from the region. Islamic art, which is believed to represent the artist's communion with God and celebration of life, uses colors and materials rich in nature's best. The balance of design and form, of traditional methods with trendy modern accents, makes a feast for the eye and spirit. Rugs, pashmina fabric, jewelry and artifacts for the home are for sale. Open daily 9:30 am-6:30 pm. 582 Jumeirah Beach Road, Dubai. Phone 04-394-1084. <http://www.mirajislamicartcentre.com>.

Sheikh Saeed Al Maktoum House, the Shindagha Museum

Dating from 1896, the home of Dubai's former ruler has been restored as a museum. The traditional Arabian house is divided into wings depicting several historical and cultural periods. The black-and-white photographs of old Dubai are incredibly insightful and well worth seeing. Free tour guides available. Nice gift shop on-site. There are cultural shows in the evenings. Saturday-Thursday 7:30 am-9 pm, Friday 3-9:30 pm, although hours are subject to change without notice, so call ahead. 3 AED adults, 1 AED children, free for children younger than 5. Al Shindagha Road (near the Al Shindagha Tunnel), Bur Dubai, Dubai. Phone 04-393-7139. <http://www.dubaitourism.ae>.

NEIGHBORHOODS & DISTRICTS

Al Fahidi District

Formerly known as the Bastakiya Quarter. Be sure to take a walk through the streets of this conservation area—the traditional architecture gives it a distinctly Arabian feel. Check out the wind towers, tall structures attached to houses that catch cooling breezes—a low-tech and highly efficient form of air-conditioning. The quarter is just east of the Dubai Museum and the Diwan (the Ruler's Office) in Bur Dubai. Walking tours are available through the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding (<http://www.cultures.ae/index.php/ouractivities/heritage-tours>).

Downtown Dubai

The area surrounding Dubai Mall, Dubai Fountain and Burj Khalifa is mostly residential, but is also full of cafes, restaurants, galleries and displays of art along the Emaar Boulevard. It is a lovely mix of living and visiting, and it offers one of the few pavements that make a saunter through the city comfortable and enjoyable. If you get tired or too hot, there is an old-fashioned shuttle bus that runs along a downtown route.

Dubai Creek

Nowhere are Dubai's contrasts more apparent than along the Creek in Deira. Striking glass-and-marble hotels and smart-suited businesspeople share the space with local traders and their traditional wooden dhows. The wharves and dhows are piled high with spices, porcelain, bolts of fabric, and exotic fruits and vegetables as they would have been hundreds of years ago. It's a great spot for a meal and people-watching, both day and night. If you want to buy something from the traders, be prepared for some serious bargaining. Along Khor Dubai (near the Radisson Blu, Deira Creek), Dubai.

JBR

Jumeirah Beach Residences may be just a vast area of towering sand-colored residential blocks in the Dubai Marina (confusingly, it's nowhere near Jumeirah), but it has become a neighborhood in itself. The JBR Walk has become a popular stretch, lined with cafes and restaurants on one side and the beach on the other. It's all got a rather fake feel about it, but it's pleasant for an evening stroll or bite to eat.

Satwa

This bustling district is popular with Dubai residents, packed full of cheap eateries and shops from across Asia. This is a great spot to see Dubai's cultural melting pot, regularly crowded with Europeans, Indians, Filipinos and Arabs all eating and strolling together. There are also plenty of excellent Indian tailors, should you require a new garment or alteration.

PARKS & GARDENS

Al Mamzar

Situated toward the neighboring emirate of Sharjah, this picturesque peninsula has several inviting beaches that often manage to remain uncrowded even during the nicer temperatures. There is also a lush green lawn in the center, plus a small cafeteria. Monday is Ladies' Day—males older than 4 are not permitted. Open daily 8 am-10 pm. Admission to the park is 5 AED per person or 30 AED per car.

Al Safa Park

Dubai's first public park, this well-laid-out park has a lot of attractions, including a Ferris wheel, bumper cars, arcade games, courts and fields for various sports, and plenty of barbecue pits. You can also rent bicycles there. Daily 8 am-11 pm (Saturday until 11:30 pm). Tuesday is Ladies' Day—no entry for males older than 7. 3 AED per person, free for children younger than 3. Between Al Wasl Road and Sheikh Zayed Road, Jumeirah, Dubai. Phone 04-349-2111.

Creekside Park

This busy park along the Creek is popular with locals for its lush lawns, gardens, running tracks, children's play areas, barbecue sites and an amphitheater where concerts and other entertainment occasionally take place. An overhead cable car makes a 45-minute run of the length of the park throughout the day. Children's City, which is also located there, has informative displays about life in Dubai, as well as many activities for children of all ages. Big, buggy-style bikes are available for hire. Saturday-Tuesday and Thursday 8 am-11 pm, Friday 8 am-11:30 pm (women and children only). Admission to the park 5 AED; fare for the cable-car ride 25 AED adults, 10 AED children; admission to the Children's City 15 AED adults, 10 AED children. Along Khor Dubai (from Al Maktoum Bridge to Al Garhoud Bridge), Bur Dubai, Dubai. Phone 04-336-7633.

Jumeirah Beach Park

Located in the heart of Jumeirah, this busy park encompasses lush gardens and clean beaches, picnic areas and a volleyball court. Lifeguards are on duty during daylight hours. Sunday and Wednesday are Ladies' Days, when males older than 4 are not admitted. Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday 7:30 am-10 pm, Thursday and Friday 7:30 am-11 pm. 5 AED adults or 20 AED per car. Jumeirah Beach Road (Jumeira), Dubai. Phone 04-349-2555. <http://www.dubaicity.com/jumeirah-beach-park/>.

AMUSEMENT PARKS

Aquaventure

Spread across 42 acres/17 hectares, Aquaventure boasts more than 10 rides, including the 90-ft-/28-m-high Leap of Faith, which catapults riders into a transparent tunnel and through a shark-filled lagoon. Aquaventure also has its own private beach. Open daily 10 am-sunset. Call to confirm, as opening hours vary seasonally. 250 AED adults, 205 AED children. Free for Atlantis guests. Children must be age 13 or older to enter unaccompanied. The Palm Jumeirah (part of Atlantis, The Palm hotel), Dubai. Phone 04-426-0000. <http://www.atlantisthepalm.com>.

See & Do: Sightseeing

Kidzania

Kids run their very own city at Kidzania, an educational theme park that allows children to participate in more than 60 role-playing activities. They drive the buses, work in the restaurants and fly the planes. Open Sunday-Wednesday 9 am-10 pm, Thursday 9 am-midnight, Friday and Saturday 10 am-midnight. 125 AED adults (must be accompanied by a child), 140 AED children ages 4-16, free for children younger than 4. The Dubai Mall, Level 2 (level 2; opposite Reel Cinemas), Downtown Dubai, Dubai. Phone 04-448-5222. <http://www.kidzania.ae>.

Sega Republic

This giant, indoor theme park boasts five zones of entertainment for all ages. There are 14 rides and more than 170 amusement games spread over two levels. Open Sunday-Wednesday 10 am-11 pm, Thursday-Saturday 10 am-1 am. A day pass for the rides is 175 AED. A day pass plus 300 AED of credit for games is 220 AED. The Dubai Mall, Level 2 (near Reel Cinemas), Dubai. Phone 04-448-8484. <http://www.segarepublic.com>.

Wild Wadi Water Park

The park is designed around the story of Sinbad the Sailor's companion Juha. There are 24 interconnecting rides, ranging from calm to wild. Lifeguards are on duty at all the pool and ride areas. Daily 10 am-6 pm. Closing times vary by season. An all-day ticket is 245 AED for adults, 185 AED for children. Be prepared to show ID. Photography is strictly prohibited. Electronic lockers are 35 AED a day; towel rentals are 35 AED each. A variety of fast-food restaurants is available; no outside food allowed. Group arrangements can be made through the marketing department. Jumeirah Beach, Umm Suqeim, Dubai. Phone 04-348-4444. <http://www.jumeirah.com/en/hotels-resorts/dubai/wild-wadi>.

ZOOS & WILDLIFE

Dubai Aquarium

Another non-shopping addition to the enormous Dubai Mall, Dubai Aquarium holds some 2.5 million gal/10 million L of water and more than 33,000 animals. The 270-degree walk-through tunnel makes for some impressive close-up encounters, while the special "lunar-cyclic" lighting system changes the ambience of the tank depending on the time of day. Open daily Sunday-Wednesday 10 am-10 pm, Thursday-Saturday 10 am-midnight. Admission to aquarium tunnel is 30 AED adults, 25 AED children ages 3-16. Admission to underwater zoo and tunnel is 70 AED adults, 55 AED children. The Dubai Mall, Dubai. Phone 04-448-5200. <http://www.thedubaiaquarium.com>.

RECREATION

Visitors in Dubai can enjoy a range of recreation experiences. Dubai is known in particular for its excellent tennis facilities and as the golf destination in the Gulf. The year-round warm weather makes the coastline an extremely popular destination. A coral reef has been constructed offshore at Jumeirah Beach, and scuba diving is just one of the watersports you can do in Dubai and farther afield on the east coast. Sailing, waterskiing, Jet-Skiing, wakeboarding and windsurfing are all readily available.

Desert activities are a must—make sure you attempt sandboarding. Sliding down the dunes on a "monoboard" (similar to a snowboard) is great fun, though the walk back up the dune can be a little tiring. All the major tour operators offer sand-skiing trips for about 200 AED for a half-day tour. A huge dune known as Big Red or Al Hamar (on the Dubai-Hatta Road) is a particularly popular venue.

BEACHES

There are plenty of public beaches in the city, all of which have swimming and tennis facilities. North of the city is Al Mamzar Beach Park, which has five clean beach areas safe for swimming. But if you want a bigger choice of restaurants and recreation options, it's worth paying to spend a day at one of Dubai's many private beach clubs linked to hotels. Most allow entry to nonmembers for a fee, although this may be restricted to certain days or times if the club is particularly busy.

Jazira Beach Resort

This resort boasts the U.A.E.'s longest beach, plus volleyball, football and billiard tables. Entrance for nonmembers is 100 AED. Near Abu Dhabi (Near Abu Dhabi), Dubai. Phone 4-562-9023. <http://goldentulipaljazira.com>.

Meridien Mina Seyahi

Visitors can use this hotel's very popular facilities. 225 AED Sunday-Thursday; 350 AED Friday, Saturday and public holidays. Al Sufouh Road, Dubai. Phone 04-399-3333. <http://www.limeridien-minaseyahi.com>.

Ritz-Carlton Beach

For a slice of luxury, pay to use the beach facilities at this upmarket club (limited availability). 300 AED Monday-Friday, 500 AED Saturday and Sunday. Dubai Marina, Dubai. Phone 04-399-4000. <http://www.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/Dubai/Contact/Default.htm>.

Sheraton Jumeirah Beach Resort

Not one of the ritzier properties, but the family-friendly atmosphere makes this spot good for little tykes, with its ample children's activities such as the Pirates Kids Club. Monday-Friday 140 AED adults, 90 AED children; Saturday and Sunday 220 AED adults, 120 AED children. Al Sufouh Road, Dubai. Phone 04-399-5533. <http://www.sheratonjumeirahbeach.com>.

BIRD WATCHING

To watch the resident flamingos against the spectacular backdrop of Dubai's skyline, visit one of the three purpose-built hides along the Ras al-Khor Wildlife Sanctuary. Open Saturday-Thursday 9 am-7 pm. <http://www.wildlife.ae>.

BOATING & SAILING

A host of companies will arrange boat trips or rentals for you in Dubai. Many marine-tour operators arrange fishing trips as well as boat trips. For watersports action, watch sailors gather at the Dubai International Marine Club in Minah Seyahi. Over 294 berths are available at the marina. <http://dimc.ae>.

Dubboats

An international star-studded team of yachtsmen helm this sailing and power boat company. Private charter rentals and tours are available. For sailing tours, choose from three boats: the Beneteau First Class 7.5, Beneteau First 34.7 and Ferretti 620. Phone 04-399-4554. <http://www.dubboats.com>.

Dusail

Morning or sunset cruises are available on the 50-ft/15-m luxury sailing yacht *Andorra*. All cruises depart from Dubai International Marine Club. 225 AED per person. Private charters from 1,800 AED per hour for 15 people. Phone 04-394-9146. <http://www.dusail.com>.

Ultimate Charter

Hire yachts from 40 ft/12 m to 340 ft/104 m, complete with crew. You can even throw in a helicopter rental. Parasailing and onboard cuisine is extra. Half-day trips start at 1,800 AED. Phone 050-100-2477. <http://www.dubaiultimatecharter.com>.

BOWLING

The city's largest alley is the Dubai Bowling Centre in Al Quoz (phone 04-339-1010). Most malls offer modern bowling alleys; one of the best is the 12-lane Yalla! Bowling at Mirdif City Centre. Phone 04-231-6257. <http://www.bowlingdubai.com>

FISHING

A host of different tour operators will take you out on fishing trips in search of tuna, barracuda, bonito, kingfish, dorado and king mackerel. The fishing season is roughly September-April, although it's still possible to catch some species in the summer.

ART Marine

Charter a speedboat for fishing, starting at 750 AED per hour. Sheikh Zayed Road (third interchange), Dubai. Phone 04-338-8955. <http://www.artmarine.net>.

Deep Sea Dubai

This fishing charter company with full-day trips guarantees catching fish. With special fishing techniques and equipment the company sets sail as far as 25 mi/40 km north of Dubai in the deep Arabian Sea. Typical catches include king fish, cobia and snapper. Jumeirah. Phone 050-450-1340. <http://www.deepseadubai.com>.

GOLF

Dubai has several well-maintained and challenging golf courses.

Al Badia Golf Club

An oasis theme with abundant waters gives this par-72 golf course a magical backdrop in this desert setting. Part of the InterContinental Hotel Group. Best to go for early morning when it's not so hot. Festival City, Dubai. Phone 04-601-0101. <http://www.albadiagolfclub.ae>.

See & Do: Recreation

Dubai Creek Golf and Yacht Club

Home to the original Dubai Desert Classic, this 18-hole, par-72 course sits in a beautiful, lush setting along Khor Dubai. With all the greenery and palm trees, you'll find it hard to believe you're playing in the middle of the desert. Al Garhoud (opposite Deira City Centre), Dubai. Phone 04-295-6000. <http://www.dubagolf.com/dubai-creek-golf-yacht-club.aspx>.

Els Golf

Designed by Ernie Els, this course has four sets of teeing areas and stretches across 7,538 yd/6,893 m. Sheikh Zayed Road (in the Dubai Sports City development), Dubai. Phone 04-425-1000. <http://www.elsclubdubai.com>.

Emirates Golf Club

A beautifully designed golf club with buildings in the style of Bedouin tents. It is the traditional host of the European PGA tour event and has taken over the Dubai Desert Classic. Nonmembers can play if they have a valid handicap certificate. Two 18-hole championship courses, two driving ranges, pool and restaurants. Greens fees 1,100 AED for the Majlis course, 695 AED for the Faldo course. Sheikh Zayed Road (Junction 5), Dubai. Phone 04-380-2222. <http://www.dubagolf.com>.

The Address Montgomerie

Located between Dubai Marina and Emirates Hills, just off Sheikh Zayed Road, this 18-hole, par-72 Championship course features unique characteristics such as a hand-shaped bunker on hole 17, an impressive 656-yd/600-m 18th hole, as well as 81 bunkers and 14 lakes. Phone 04-390-5600. <http://www.themontgomerie.com>.

HIKING & WALKING

Absolute Adventures

Located near Dibba on the border with Oman, this adventure company organizes several half- and full-day trekking tours across the beautiful Musandam and the east coast, with fully qualified guides. Phone 04-345-9900. <http://www.adventure.ae>.

Desert Rangers

Experienced rangers lead walking trips among the mountains and desert throughout the emirates. There are a variety of routes to suit different abilities and ages. Phone 04-340-2408. <http://www.desertrangers.com>.

HORSEBACK RIDING

Emirates Equestrian Centre

Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum is the patron of this riding center, which is home to the national team. It has approximately 150 horses, a floodlit arena, riding school, dressage arenas and 10 instructors who are all qualified by the British Horse Society. Trail rides and short rides are available. Saturday-Thursday 7 am-7 pm. Near Bab Al Shams Hotel, Dubai. Phone 04-553-7986. <http://www.emiratesequestriancentre.com/eec>.

JA Jebel Ali Gold Resort

Based at the JA Jebel Ali Gold Resort, these air-conditioned horse stables are about 650 ft/200 m from the hotel's beach. There are six horses, and the riding instructor conducts lessons Tuesday-Saturday, October-early June (horse riding is not available in the hot summer months). Phone 04-814-5555. <http://www.jaresortshotels.com/Properties/JAGR/SportsLeisure/HorseRiding.aspx>.

JOGGING

See & Do: Recreation

The best place in the city for jogging is Safa Park, and if you want to meet up with other joggers, give Dubai Road Runners a call (phone 04-340-3777; <http://www.dubairoadrunners.com>). It's a friendly group that organizes regular evening jogs of varying distances. Desert Hash House Harriers is a social running club that goes on different routes every Sunday, just before sunset. Phone 055-789-7943. <http://www.deserthash.org>.

If it is too hot outside or a jog a little too strenuous, try mall-walking. Every Sunday-Thursday meet fellow walkers in Mall of the Emirates at 8:30 am for a fast-paced walk around the mall before the shops open. The first cafes will be opening just as you finish up.

SCUBA & SNORKELING

Though it is possible to scuba dive in Dubai, the huge offshore developments generate extremely cloudy water with poor visibility. If you take a 90-minute trip to the east coast, however, you can enjoy some of the best diving in the Middle East.

Al Boom Diving Instruction

You can arrange to take a PADI specialty course in wreck or deep specialty with four dives for 1,850 AED. Beginner dive courses start at AED 150. Other options include diving with sharks at the Dubai Mall Aquarium's shark tank. Al Wasl Road (at 33rd Street, next to the Iranian Embassy), Dubai. Phone 04-342-2993. <http://alboomdiving.com>.

Atlantis Dive Centre

This outstanding PADI dive center offers a range of courses to suit every ability, with access to new dive sites along Dubai's coastline. The Palm (at Atlantis resort), Jumeirah, Dubai. Phone 04-426-3000. <http://www.atlantisthepalm.com>.

Le Meridien Al Aqah

The hotel has an excellent dive center that supplies full equipment for its guests. Fujairah, Dubai. Phone 09-204-4925. <http://www.starwoodhotels.com/lemeridien/property/features/index.html?propertyID=1901>.

Sandy Beach Dive Centre

An exclusive diving resort where you can stay and play just down the road from Le Meridien Al Aqah. Fujairah, Dubai. Phone 09-244-5555. <http://www.sandybm.com/diving.htm>.

SKIING

SkiDubai

SkiDubai is an indoor ski slope covered with freshly made snow, located at the Mall of the Emirates. It offers full equipment rentals, five different slopes for different abilities and a chalet-style cafe near the summit, plus tobogganing, ice caves and areas for kids to build snowpeople. Sunday-Wednesday 10 am-11 pm, Thursday 10 am-midnight, Friday 9 am-midnight, Saturday 9 am-11 pm. A full-day pass, including all equipment rental, costs 300 AED adults, 275 AED children. A two-hour pass costs 200 AED adults, 170 AED children. Entry to the snow park only is 150 AED and includes winter gear. Mall of the Emirates, Dubai. Phone 04-409-9000. <http://www.theplaymania.com/skidubai>.

SPAS AND HEALTH CLUBS

Dubai prides itself on its spas and health clubs. Every self-respecting hotel has its own pampering parlors, where stressed Dubaians can go to unwind and work out.

1847

Spas aren't just for women, as this old-school-style barbershop proves, with close shaves and manicures for guys. Four additional locations at Grosvenor House (phone 04-339-8989), JBR The Walk (phone 04-422-1847), Mirdif City Centre (phone 04-236-2020), CityWalk (phone 04-344-3363) and Jumeirah Beach Road (phone 04-437-0252). Emirates Towers Boulevard, Dubai. Phone 04-330-1847. <http://www.1847uae.com>.

Akaru Spa at the Aviation Club Dubai

The city's long-term favorite, the Aviation Club Dubai is a top-end gym with modern equipment, a wonderful sauna, a pool and the Akaru spa, with 14 treatment rooms that cater to both men and women. Phone 04-230-8565. <http://www.jumeirah.com/en/hotels-resorts/dubai/jumeirah-creekside-hotel/spa/akaru-spa>.

Assawan Spa

This decadent spa is used by the rich and famous. Burj Al Arab, Dubai. Phone 04-301-7338. <http://assawanspaeng.jumeirah.com>.

Cleopatra's Spa

Exclusive, exorbitant and delightfully indulgent. At the Wafi Pyramids, Dubai. Phone 04-324-0000. <http://www.cleopatrasspaandwellness.com>.

Raffles Spa

This spa has a hamman for a good scrubbing down. Pool daily 6:30 am-10 pm, spa treatments daily 9 am-9 pm, spa facility and fitness center daily 6:30 am-11 pm. Raffles Hotel, Oud Metha, Dubai. Phone 04-314-9870. <http://www.affles.com/dubai/spa>.

The One&Only Spa

With a distinctly Arabian theme, this luxury spa is located in the five-star hotel's domed building and offers a hammam. One&Only Royal Mirage, Dubai. Phone 04-399-9999. <http://royalmirage.oneandonlyresorts.com/healthandbeauty/oneandonlyspa.aspx>.

The Spa, The Palace Downtown Dubai

Luxurious, serene and full of indulgent treatments for women, men and couples. The Palace Downtown Dubai, Dubai. Phone 04-428-7805. <http://www.theaddress.com/en/relatedhotel/spa-4/the-palace-downtown-dubai-1>.

OTHER OPTIONS

Dubai Autodrome

This go-kart track's range of turbo-charged vehicles can go astonishingly fast. Age 13 minimum. No advance booking required. 260 AED for choice of indoor or outdoor track. Sheikh Zayed Road, MotorCity, Dubai. Phone 04-367-8700. <http://www.dubaiautodrome.com>.

Dubailand

Pegged as the most ambitious leisure development project the world has ever seen (costing an estimated US\$64.3 billion), this huge complex, when it opens in 2015, will definitely aim to please discerning travelers. Picture 45 major projects and more than 200 sub-projects comprised of six zones dubbed as "worlds." There's the Attractions and Experience World; Sports and Outdoor World; Eco-Tourism World; Themed Leisure and Vacation World; Retail and Entertainment World; and Downtown. Some of the big attractions will include a DreamWorks Park, a Six Flags Dubailand theme park and a Sahara Kingdom theme park containing an IMAX theater and state-of-the-art gaming with live entertainment shows laced around the Arabian folklore themes. Currently the following sites are open: Dubai Autodrome; Dubai Outlet Mall; Dubai Sports City; Global Village and the Dubailand Visitor Center. Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai. Phone 04-368-0000. <http://www.dubailand.ae>.

See & Do: Recreation

Emirates Karting Centre

Speed around this go-kart track for 120 AED for 15 minutes and 240 AED for a half hour. Monday-Wednesday 3 pm-10 pm, Thursday-Saturday 3 pm-noon, Sunday 3 pm-10 pm. Al Wasl Sports Club (near Latifa Hospital), Dubai. Phone 050-426-3424. <http://www.emirateskartzone.net>.

Shooting Club at Jebel Ali

If you're in the mood to blast some clay pigeons to pieces, head for the Shooting Club at Jebel Ali, where you can shoot rounds or take lessons. 25 birds and a shotgun will cost you 220 AED. Archery is also available at 100 AED for 30 minutes, including equipment and instruction. Jebel Ali, Dubai. Phone 04-883-6555.

Wadi Adventure

Go for an hour's drive from Dubai, and you wind up in the Al Ain desert: sand, rugged mountains, dried-up river beds—and a waterpark with some of the best surfing around. Artificial waves up to 10 ft/3 m high offer good surf, and there is even wild-water rafting and kayaking. Phone 03-781-8422. <http://www.wadiadventure.ae>.

NIGHTLIFE

Many people expect the U.A.E., as an Islamic country, to have a pretty tame nightlife. This is definitely not the case in Dubai. There are plenty of bars and clubs (most based in hotels in order to serve alcohol) attracting a lively and eclectic crowd. Most nightclubs have cover charges, and drinks tend to be pricey. Virtually every bar in town has a resident band and DJ, and there are a few jazz bars and piano lounges with excellent live performers.

Most bars don't start filling up until at least 9 pm, and the nightclubs are practically empty until about 11 pm. Thursday is always busy because it's the start of most people's weekend. Tuesday is Ladies' Night at many places, but if you study the schedules carefully, there is always a Ladies' Night somewhere around town—and ladies can often get a lot of free drinks. Most bars and clubs close by about 3 am, and there are usually plenty of cabs waiting outside to take you home.

Dubai is relatively crime-free and it feels pretty safe walking on the streets even in the late hours, but it doesn't hurt to be careful. With an ever-growing population from diverse backgrounds, it is hard to predict friend or foe in an inebriated state. The legalized cabs are safe and run by meter, with additional charges after midnight, but stay away from private "car lifts," which abound in the city.

Although it isn't openly discussed, some bars and clubs have a "door policy" that can be blatantly racist. If you find this is the case, arguing with the doorman rarely makes a difference—just don't give that place your business. A lot of bad press has been given to these places, and hopefully things will change. You should bear in mind that it is illegal for people younger than 21 to enter a bar or drink alcohol in the U.A.E. Remember, too, that no live music or loud background music is played in the city's bars during the holy month of Ramadan, and the clubs close. Alcohol is served, but only after sunset at most major hotels and restaurants. However, some hotels are morphing into *halal* hotels opting to go alcohol-free in response to the burgeoning growth in Islamic tourist arrivals.

BARS, TAVERNS & PUBS

Armani/Prive

At the foot of the world's tallest tower sits this vast and exclusive designer bar, a favorite for the beautiful and those willing to splash their money around. Inside is suitably Armani, with very subtle lighting and cozy booths. The DJ keeps things lively till the early hours. Open daily 9 pm-3 am. Reservations required. Burj Khalifa Tower (in the Armani Hotel Dubai), Dubai. Phone 04-883-3308.
http://dubai.armanihotels.com/dine/dine_armani_prive_en.html.

At.mosphere

This is the highest bar and lounge in the world, on level 122 of the Burj Khalifa. Views don't really get any better than this. Add to that an extensive drink list and delectable bar snacks, and you'll have an evening to remember. Burj Khalifa, Dubai. Phone 04-888-3444. <http://www.atmosphereburjkhalifa.com>.

Bahri Bar

If it's a view you're after, look no further. While having a drink in relaxed surroundings, you can gaze at the harbor, the Gulf and the adjacent Burj Al Arab, a truly beautiful setting. Offers Arabian tapas, innovative cocktails and jazz in the evenings. No one younger than 21 admitted. Saturday-Monday 4 pm-2 am, Tuesday-Friday 4 pm-3 am. Jumeirah Road (in the Mina A'Salam at Madinat Jumeirah), Dubai. Phone 04-366-6730.
<https://www.jumeirah.com/en/hotels-resorts/dubai/madinat-jumeirah/restaurants--bars/bahri-bar>.

Bar 44

A 44th-floor champagne bar serving 44 different types of champagne. Pricey, but the views of the Dubai Marina are worth it. Chic and glamorous, with a jet-setting crowd. Live jazz with pianist and vocalist. Daily 6 pm-2 am. Al Sofouh Road (in the Grosvenor House hotel), Dubai. Phone 04-317-6871.
<http://www.royaldiningcollection.com/restaurant-details.aspx?rId=8&t=Bar-44>.

Barasti Bar

With bars on two levels, this beach outlet attracts a hip crowd and is packed on weekends, especially if there's a concert. Wonderful views overlooking the Palm Jumeirah and the Arabian Gulf. Also shows most major sporting events via several giant screens. Daily noon-1 am. Al Sufouh Road (in Le Meridien Mina Seyahi Beach Resort & Marina), Dubai. Phone 04-399-3333. <http://barastibeach.com>.

Belgian Beer Cafe Souk Madinat

This is the best bar in the Festival City area, offering a range of fruity Belgian ales, bowls of steaming mussels and views of the Creek. It's a popular spot with expats on the weekend. Open daily noon-2 am. Phone 04-447-0227. <http://www.belgianbeercafejumeirah.com>.

Cavalli Club

Dubai's first designer bar was designed by Roberto Cavalli himself and is suitably ostentatious, heavily adorned with Swarovski crystals and favored by the wealthy. Unsurprisingly, it's not cheap, but this doesn't stop the crowds who gather each weekend. Open daily 8 pm-3 am. Sheikh Zayed Road (in The Fairmont Dubai), Dubai. Phone 04-332-9260. <http://www.fairmont.com/dubai/dining/cavallclub>.

Long's Bar

Dubai's longest bar, with a separate restaurant area and a small dance floor, is modeled after the famous Long Bar at the Raffles Hotel in Singapore. Tiger Beer and the Singapore Sling are among the offerings served. Daily noon-2:30 am. Dress is not overly formal in this cool, relaxed place. There are special offers most nights. Tuesday and Wednesday are Ladies' Nights, with two free drinks. Sheikh Zayed Road (in Towers Rotana Hotel), Dubai. Phone 04-312-2202. <http://www.rotana.com/rotanahotelandresorts/unitedarabemirates/dubai/towersrotana/dining>.

Neos

On level 63 of The Address Downtown Dubai hotel, this lounge is classy, chic and has stunning views over the Burj Khalifa and Dubai Fountain. Open 6 pm-2:30 am, with a minimum spend for visits after 10 pm. Emaar Boulevard, Dubai. Phone 04-888-3444. <http://www.theaddress.com/en/dining/neos-1>.

Rooftop Bar

This Arabic-themed terrace bar has an indoor section decorated with lush Persian carpets. It has an elegant, chilled atmosphere and delicious drinks. The in-house DJ keeps the mood relaxed as guests sink into deep armchairs and take in the scenery of the Gulf. Light meze served. Daily 5 pm-1 am. Jumeirah Beach Road (in the One&Only Royal Mirage), Dubai. Phone 04-399-9999. <http://royalmirage.oneandonlyresorts.com/cuisine/barsandclubs/therooftop.aspx>.

Sho Cho

This beachside spot is a firm favorite with Dubai's movers and shakers, offering excellent views of the Jumeirah coast accompanied by local DJs each evening. Although there is no set door policy, it's best not to wear sneakers. Open daily 7 pm-3 am. Jumeirah Beach Road (in the Dubai Marine Beach Resort & Spa), Dubai. Phone 04-346-1111. <http://www.dxbmarine.com/Sho-Cho>.

The Agency

A chic and elegant wine bar that attracts beautiful people. Often crowded, it is a place to be seen. Extensive wine list and light snacks are available. Daily from 5 pm. Souk Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai. Phone 04-366-6320. <https://www.jumeirah.com/en/hotels-resorts/dubai/madinat-jumeirah/restaurants--bars/the-agency>.

The Irish Village

Probably the most popular pub in Dubai—maybe because it's one of the few bars not attached to a hotel. Set in a village-style street, it's jammed every night. The friendly Irish barkeepers will make you feel welcome. Food is the usual pub fare with some Irish specialties. A gift shop makes for some distraction, with a good selection of souvenirs and memorabilia. Daily 11 am-1 am, till 2 am on Thursday and Friday. The Aviation Club, Al Garhoud, Dubai. Phone 04-282-4750. <http://www.irishvillage.ae>.

Vintage

One of the best wine bars in the city, Vintage serves a winning mix of fresh cheese, exciting bottles from around the world and laid-back jazz in a comfy, low-key venue. It's the sort of place you'll go for a quick drink and emerge five hours later significantly poorer but indubitably happier. Friday-Wednesday 5 pm-1 am, Thursday 5 pm-2 am. Wafi Pyramids, Oud Metha, Dubai. Phone 04-324-4100.

<http://www.pyramidsrestaurantsatwafi.com/restaurants/vintage.html>.

Waxy O'Conner's

There's a party atmosphere every night in this very British hangout. Televised sporting events and a DJ bring in the crowds. Thursday is Ladies' Night, and the champagne flows freely. Daily noon-2 am. The Ascot, Bur Dubai, Dubai. Phone 04-352-0900. <http://www.ascothoteldubai.com>.

DANCE & NIGHTCLUBS

360

Possibly one of the most scenic spots in Dubai, 360 is a circular island at the end of a pier off the Jumeirah Beach Hotel. On weekends it comes alive with local and international DJs spinning for clubbers who like to keep things outdoors. Because of this, 360 closes during the summer months (June-September). Open daily 5 pm-2 am.

Phone 04-406-8744. <http://www.jumeirah.com/en/hotels-resorts/dubai/jumeirah-beach-hotel/restaurants/360>.

Chi the Lodge

One of Dubai's oldest clubs, Chi has seen a revival thanks to an extremely expensive facelift. A vast club with several rooms (including an enormous outdoor section), Chi welcomes all manner of international DJs and bands, and can get incredibly crowded. Open daily 9 pm-3 am. Al Nasr Leisureland, Dubai. Phone 04-337-9470.

Cu-ba Rooftop Lounge and Bar

A fantastic rooftop bar at the Jumeirah Creekside Hotel that attracts a beautiful crowd. The club receives regular visits from international DJs and also has an excellent in-house DJ. Daily noon-2 am. Tuesday has a DJ retrospective from 9 pm. Thursday is dedicated to Latin tunes from 9 pm. Nightly 10 pm-2 am. Cover usually AED 100. Al Garhoud. Phone 04-230-8459.

<http://www.jumeirah.com/en/hotels-resorts/dubai/jumeirah-creekside-hotel/restaurants/cu-ba>.

Malecon

This bar and restaurant has a lively Cuban vibe with live Latin music Sunday-Friday from 10 pm. Graffiti from former guests covers the walls, salsa dancers occupy the floor, and the mojitos are beautifully strong. Salsa dancing and lessons available. Daily from 7 pm. Smart casual dress. No cover. Jumeirah Beach Road (Dubai Marine Beach Resort & Spa; next to Palm Strip shopping mall), Jumeirah, Dubai. Phone 04-346-1111.

<http://www.dxbmarine.com/dining-entertainment/malecon>.

Zinc Night Club

Zinc mesmerizes. Guest DJs and a great house band help this club maintain a loyal crowd of regulars. Drink promotions, comedy nights and a restaurant area add to the experience. Nightly 10 pm-3 am. Smart casual dress. No cover charge; there's a couples policy (men must be with a woman to enter). Sheikh Zayed Road (in the Crowne Plaza Hotel), Dubai. Phone 50-151-5609. <http://www.facebook.com/zincnightclub>.

LIVE MUSIC

Barzar

Inside the Souk Madinat Jumeirah lies this industrial-themed bar big on British elements such as fancy pub grub and casual cocktails. Dance to tunes from the hotel's house band 4TheMusic nightly. Get your *shisha* dose there, too. Nightly from 6 pm-3 am. No cover charge; minimum spending of 250 AED per person Thursday and Friday. Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai. Phone 04-366-6730.

<https://www.jumeirah.com/en/hotels-resorts/dubai/madinat-jumeirah/restaurants--bars/barzar->

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See & Do: Nightlife

Blue Bar

Considered Dubai's only true jazz and blues venue, Thursday and Friday are live jazz nights with a five-piece band. A great selection of specialty beers from Belgium make this smart lobbyside bar a popular option. The local Time Out publication chose the bar as best live music venue in 2014. Daily 2 pm-2 am. Zabeel Road (in the Novotel World Trade Centre, next to the convention center), Dubai. Phone 04-332-0000.

<http://www.novotel.com/gb/hotel-5261-novotel-world-trade-centre-dubai/restaurant.shtml>.

Seville's

Two guitarists play Spanish music all night long while you feast on tapas, Latin offerings and tequilas. Sit out on the terrace for a mellow evening. On Friday during the winter, there's a regular "Peanut Butter Jam" night featuring talented local bands. Sunday is movie night; get comfy on beanbag seats. Daily noon-2 am. Planet Hollywood, Wafi City, Oud Al Metha, Dubai. Phone 04-324-4777.

<http://www.pyramidsrestaurantsatwafi.com/restaurants/sevilles.html>.

The Music Room

A potpourri of live bands gives this venue a fabulous mix of musical genres. Watch local talent and up-and-coming acts. The latest Digidesign desk means the sound is cutting edge. Nightly 6 pm-3 am. 317-106 Mankhool Road, Dubai. Phone 04-359-8888. <http://www.facebook.com/MusicRoomDubai>.

OTHER OPTIONS

Shisha cafes are found on many street corners around Dubai. They are mostly frequented by local men who meet to play backgammon and chat with friends, but they're also popular with tourists and expats. Smoking a *shisha* pipe isn't the same as smoking a cigarette or cigar. The fruit-flavored smoke is blown through water, giving it a milder taste. (However, it's just as bad for your health as other forms of smoking.)

See & Do: Performing Arts

PERFORMING ARTS

Dubai's performing-arts scene is starting to pick up speed with more and more Western-style entertainment companies providing arts and cultural performances.

Arabic entertainment can be experienced in Dubai's many Arabic nightclubs; traditional Arabic folk dance and belly dancing often highlight some of the organized tours around town.

Performance details are often available only on short notice, so it's best to check local publications such as *Time Out Dubai* (<http://www.timeoutdubai.com>) or ask at hotels about current performances around town. Tickets for most performing-arts events can be bought through the Time Out Ticketline (phone 04-800-4669) or from Virgin Megastores.

FILM

There are more than 10 movie theaters in town, including an IMAX theater and a 21-screen venue at Ibn Battuta Mall. The 22-screen Reel Cinemas in The Dubai Mall is top-of-the-line and extremely comfortable. Some cinemas offer "Gold Class" which provides bigger seats and allows guests to order food. Though blockbusters tend to dominate the cinemas, things are gradually starting to change. The annual Dubai Film Festival, held each December, has received great acclaim and attracts some big names.

THEATER

Dubai Drama Group

Stages four Western-style productions a year, including a pantomime at Christmas. Phone 04-337-1540. <http://www.dubaidramagroup.com>.

DUCTAC

The Dubai Community Theatre and Arts Centre located in Mall of the Emirates offers a variety of shows, performances and events throughout the year. Mall of the Emirates, Dubai. Phone 04-341-4777. <http://www.ductac.org>.

Madinat Theatre

Top-notch Western-style entertainment. Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai. Phone 04-366-6546. <http://www.madinattheatre.com>.

See & Do: Spectator Sports

SPECTATOR SPORTS

Dubai doesn't offer a wide-ranging sports scene, but it does host some top events.

The Dubai World Cup at the new Meydan Racetrack is the city's biggest horse-racing event—it's also one of the world's richest. It usually takes place in March, but the regular racing season is November-April.

The Dubai Desert Classic also has a big purse, and therefore draws big names in the world of golf.

The Dubai Tennis Open attracts top female and male players in February and March, respectively.

In late November, Dubai hosts the Rugby Sevens, a popular international competition and festival.

And in early December, the World Offshore Formula One Power Boat Championships take place along the Jumeirah coastline, starting from the Dubai International Marine Club, Mina Seyahi.

Dubai Sports City, a vast development slightly out of town, has begun hosting various games, most notably international cricket matches in the new cricket stadium.

Occasionally Dubai hosts small football (soccer) tournaments, such as five-a-side beach soccer, and regularly attracts some of the world's biggest names to attend.

OTHER OPTIONS

Camel racing is extremely popular in Dubai and throughout the U.A.E. There are 14,000 racing camels in the country. Although betting on camel (or horse) racing is illegal, it still draws tremendous local interest, as prizes to winners are exorbitant. Races are frequent and can be found on the outskirts of Dubai. Admission is free. For information and schedules, phone the Dubai Camel Racing Club at 04-832-6526 (<http://www.dcrc.ae>).

One of the most beautiful spectacles is the dhow races. The sleek wooden sailboats majestically cross the Persian Gulf, promoting the long-standing tradition. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to find out when these races take place, but do make sure to check with your hotel concierge.

SHOPPING

Dubai definitely deserves the title of shopping capital of the Middle East. Shoppers need not look hard or far for something to spend their money on. Low customs duties make luxury goods less expensive than in most countries, and Dubai Duty Free at the airport is a great place for last-minute shopping—it has won lots of awards as one of the best duty-free operations in the world.

There are three main types of places for shopping in the city: shopping malls, souks, and the shopping streets or areas. Dubai's shopping malls are typically Western in style, with a variety of shops and big-brand names under one roof. Souks are common in the emirates and tend to be good places to buy gold, fabrics, electronics and traditional Arabic art. Shopping areas include lots of individual shops that usually sell similar items.

Bargaining is acceptable in most places, even in some malls, but it is becoming increasingly less common. Ask for "the best price" and you'll often get a better price "after discount." You have to ask for this type of discount and be firm about how much you want to pay. In the souks, start by halving the asking price and bargaining from there. Paying in cash can help lower the price. Sometimes it helps to leave the shop or stall in your negotiations, and the seller will come after you to agree to your price.

Good buys include clothes and fabrics, carpets and rugs, electronics, sporting goods, perfumes, jewelry and, of course, gold. The Gold Souk in Deira by the Creek is one of the largest retail gold markets in the world. Local souvenirs worth hunting for include locally grown dates, Arabic coffee and coffee pots, silver and brass swords and *khanjars* (curved daggers), ancient rifles, *shisha* pipes, porcelain prayer beads, antique silver jewelry, brass trinkets, silver and wooden miniature dhows, Persian carpets, and heavy, dark rosewood and walnut furniture.

The Dubai Shopping Festival is an annual monthlong event held from mid-January to mid-February, with lots of bargains to be had and plenty of activities going on. There is certainly an increased volume of visitors during this festival, and traffic gets a tad tight, but it's all still manageable. Dubai Summer Surprises, held from June to the end of August, is also a good time to look for bargains if you can stand the summertime heat.

Shopping Hours: Generally, shops are open daily 10 am-1 pm and 4-9 pm. Shopping malls are usually open daily 10 am-10 pm, although some shops in the smaller malls close 1-4 pm. Many shops close for prayers on Friday 11:30 am-1:30 pm.

ANTIQUÉ STORES

Faytak Fine Arts and Antiques

From classical Biedermeier to French art deco to empire period furniture, this fine arts and antique shop showcases fabulous pieces, making it a popular spot in the collectors' circuit. 7i Galadari Plaza, Dubai. Phone 50-280-1400. <http://www.faytakdesigns.com>.

Showcase Antiques

Old Omani furniture and silver, Arabic pistols and knives are Showcase's stock-in-trade. One of the few places in Dubai selling the real deal rather than synthetic modern replicas—wander around the store and you're bound to find a bargain. Saturday-Thursday 10 am-6 pm. Jumeirah Beach Road, Dubai. Phone 04-348-8797. <http://showcaseuae.com>.

BOOKSTORES

Book Corner

This is a large bookstore chain in the emirates, with two main outlets in Dubai. It tends to get the latest titles in quickly and often gives good discounts on books, which can be expensive in Dubai. The second location is at Dune Centre in Satwa (phone 04-345-5490). Daily 10 am-10 pm. Bani Yas Road (Deira City Centre), Dubai. Phone 04-295-3266. <http://www.bookcorner.ae>.

Book World by Kinokuniya

Easily Dubai's biggest bookstore, Kinokuniya sits on the top floor of The Dubai Mall. It stocks a vast array of books (more than half a million) of all genres, alongside a huge international magazine section. The Dubai Mall, Dubai. Phone 04-434-0111. <http://www.thedubaimall.com/en/shop/book-world-by-kinokuniya>.

Borders

This spacious and beautifully laid out bookstore chain (no longer affiliated with the bankrupt company) boasts the most up-to-date publications. The well-trained staff is very helpful. Daily 10 am-midnight. Mall of the Emirates, Dubai. Phone 04-341-5758.

Magrudy's

Dubai's best-loved bookshop, with an excellent selection of mostly English-language books, especially local guidebooks and maps. The staff is eager to help. Additional locations at Deira City Centre and Burjuman. Daily 9 am-10 pm. Jumeirah Road (Magrudy's Shopping Mall), Jumeirah, Dubai. Phone 04-344-4193.

The House of Prose

A wonderful chain of secondhand bookstores with a twist—if you take back something you've bought there, you'll get a 50% refund. Charming atmosphere with exceptionally good values even before the buy-back guarantee. Second location at Dubai Garden Centre. Daily 9 am-8 pm. Jumeirah Plaza, Dubai. Phone 04-340-0006.

DEPARTMENT STORES

Bloomingdale's

This is the iconic store's first outlet outside of the U.S. It stocks everything you'd expect across its huge 200,000-sq-ft/18,580-sq-m space. Sunday-Wednesday 10 am-10 pm, Thursday-Saturday 10 am-midnight. The Dubai Mall, Dubai. Phone 04-350-4333. <http://www.bloomingdales.com>.

Boutique 1

This three-level high-fashion store offers a bit of everything: designer clothing along with personal stylists, home furnishings, an art gallery, books, a VIP lounge, spa and cafe. Valet parking is available. Daily 10 am-11 pm. The Walk at Jumeirah Beach Residence, Dubai. Phone 04-425-7888. <http://www.boutique1.com>.

Debenhams

This multilevel retail haven at City Centre Mall is a self-contained shopping experience, offering everything from home furnishings to designer perfume. The kids' clothing section is one of the best in town. Additional locations at Mall of the Emirates and Ibn Battuta Mall. Daily 10 am-midnight. Deira City Centre Mall, Dubai. Phone 04-294-0011. <http://www.deiracitycentre.com>.

Saks 5th Avenue

The New York behemoth has been transported to Dubai, where it has caused huge ripples of delight among the city's label junkies. Within, you'll find a barrage of high-end stores, including Christian Dior, Tiffany and Jean Paul Gaultier. Daily 10 am-10 pm. BurJuman Mall, Bur Dubai, Dubai. Phone 04-351-5551.

FACTORY OUTLETS

Century 2000

Though you'll have to pick through some real duds to find the designer gems, they are there—expect Cavalli, D&G and the occasional bit of Gucci at knockdown prices. Sunday-Wednesday 10 am-10 pm, Thursday-Saturday 10 am-midnight. Al Ain Road, Route 66 (close to Lamcy Plaza), Dubai. Phone 04-425-5830.

Dubai Outlet Mall

This complex has more than 240 stores to peruse. Open Sunday-Wednesday 10 am-10 pm, Thursday-Saturday 10 am-midnight. Al Ain Road (Dubailand), Dubai. Phone 04-423-4666. <http://www.dubaioutletmall.com>.

GALLERIES

Majilis Gallery

This old Arabian house has been transformed into an art gallery. It exhibits and sells work by local artists, plus a mix of traditional and modern pottery, furniture and glassware. Saturday-Thursday 10 am-6 pm. Al Faheidi Street (Bastakiya Quarter; near the Al Faheidi Roundabout), Bur Dubai, Dubai. Phone 04-353-6233. <http://www.themajlisgallery.com>.

The Courtyard Gallery

An unusual arts-and-culture center built around a courtyard, surrounded by warehouses with painted fronts depicting different building styles from around the world. There are furniture and antiques shops, artist studios, art galleries and a coffee shop. Exhibitions are held regularly (check local entertainment guides for details). It's a bit of a drive out of town, but it's worth it. Saturday-Thursday 10 am-6 pm. Junction 3, Al Quoz (near Spinneys warehouse), Jumeirah, Dubai. Phone 04-347-9090. <http://www.courtyardgallerydubai.com>.

The Empty Quarter

Specializing in photography, this gallery in the Dubai International Financial Centre is one of the best showcases of local, regional and international photographs. Sunday-Thursday 10 am-10 pm, Saturday 2-8 pm. Phone 04-323-1210. <http://www.theemptyquarter.com>.

The Jam Jar

Located in the industrial quarter of Al Quoz, this gallery showcases contemporary art from local and international artists. Open Monday-Thursday 10 am-8 pm, Friday 2-8 pm, Sheikh Zayed Road, Exit 39 (behind Dubai Garden Center), Dubai. Phone 04-341-7303. <http://www.thejamjardubai.com>.

The Third Line

The smartest fine-art gallery in town, Third Line uses its large warehouse space to exhibit an exciting range of local and international work, as well as lots of contemporary paintings and sculptures by Middle Eastern artists. Daily except Friday 10 am-7 pm. Al Quoz 3, Dubai. Phone 04-341-1367. <http://www.thethirdline.com>.

XVA Gallery

Housed in an old building converted into a gallery, XVA's exhibits include installation art, portraits, paintings and photography. The gallery focuses on local and regional art but sometimes presents European and American exhibitors. There is also a vegetarian cafe serving Arabic food. Daily 10 am-6 pm. Al Fahidi, Bastakiya (behind the Arabian Tea House Cafe), Dubai. Phone 04-353-5383.

MARKETS

Gold Souk

Window after window in Dubai's famous Gold Souk is dripping in gold chains, rings and earrings. Situated under a covered walkway, the market houses a few shops selling pretty silver jewelry, too. Bargain hard and then walk across the street and take a look at the Spice Souk. Saturday-Thursday 9:30 am-1 pm and 4-10 pm, Friday 4-10 pm. Near the Hyatt Regency hotel, Deira, Dubai.

Souk Madinat

Souk Madinat is a re-creation of an ancient Arabian market, composed of 75 boutique-style shops and galleries that sell everything from designer fashions to Arabian furniture, gold, textiles and souvenirs. Guests of the Madinat Jumeirah can charge their purchases to their rooms. Daily 10 am-11 pm. Madinat Jumeirah, Jumeirah Beach, Dubai.

See & Do: Shopping

Spice Souk

Situated close to the Gold Souk, Dubai's Spice Souk is popular with local residents. Spices of every scent and hue can be found there, as well as dried fish, flowers and incense. Huge sacks line the dimly lit walkways; the aroma can be overpowering at times, with all the spices mixing together. Saturday-Thursday 9:30 am-1 pm and 4-10 pm, Friday 4-10 pm. Creekside, Deira, Dubai.

Textile Souk

Huge swaths of cloth change hands every day in this vaulted alleyway where tailors and traders hawk their services. Though the focus is on excellent-value materials, there are a few shops doing a nice sideline in jeweled Arabic slippers. Daily except Friday 9 am-6 pm. On Bur Dubai Creekside (next to the Bastakiya Mosque), Dubai.

SHOPPING AREAS

Al Faheidi Street

This is the street to go to for all your electronic-goods shopping, including cameras. You'll find all the major brands, but make sure you look around before you buy: The same products are available in lots of shops, and prices can differ dramatically. Bargaining is expected, so don't be shy. Daily 8 am-1:30 pm and 4-9:30 pm. Closed Friday morning. Al Faheidi Street (near the Astoria Hotel), Bur Dubai, Dubai.

BurJuman

You can't miss the big pink mall on the Bur Dubai side of the city. It has a good range of upscale shops and is a pleasant place to shop, with its glass atrium and food court. Saturday-Wednesday 10 am-10 pm, Thursday and Friday 10 am-midnight. Trade Center Road, Bur Dubai, Dubai. Phone 04-352-0222. <http://www.burjuman.com>.

Deira City Centre

This outsized mall is spread over two immense floors with hundreds of stores, a children's play area, food courts and an 11-screen cinema. It sells just about everything and has lots of international names. Saturday-Wednesday 10 am-10 pm, Thursday-Friday 10 am-midnight. Al Garhoud Road, Deira, Dubai. Phone 04-295-1010. <http://www.deiracitycentre.com>.

Dubai Dragon Mart

There are 4,000 merchants located in this massive collection of importers of Chinese goods, where you'll find the best deal possible on just about anything. Even if you're not a shopper, you'll enjoy browsing the endless variety of goods and seeing the giant dragon-shaped structure that houses the facilities. Open Saturday-Wednesday 10 am-10 pm, Thursday 10 am-11 pm, Friday 2-11 pm. <http://www.dragonmart.ae>.

Dubai Festival City

Spanning 1,300 acres/526 hectares and stretching 2 mi/3 km along Dubai Creek, this ultramodern community is divided into three distinct districts and includes condominiums, several hotels, an entertainment and sports complex, the Al Badia Golf Club, the Four Seasons Golf Club, restaurants and some of the best shopping in the city. Easy access from the Garhoud and Ras Al Khor bridges, Dubai. <http://www.dubaifestivalcity.com>.

Dubai Mall

Dubai's largest tribute to shopping is now undergoing an expansion—all part of Dubai's new tourism vision expected to be completed for the World Expo in 2020. The first phase is to expand the mall by 1 million square feet without disruption to existing services. Currently, its Fashion Avenue has almost every major fashion brand represented. There is also an ice-skating rink, aquarium, cinema and various children's theme parks, and it's next door to the world's tallest tower. Open Sunday-Wednesday 10 am-10 pm, Thursday-Saturday 10 am-midnight. Financial Centre Road, Dubai. Toll-free 800-3822-46255. <http://www.thedubaimall.com>.

Emirates Towers Boulevard

This shopping complex links the Jumeirah Emirates Towers Hotel and the Jumeirah Emirates Towers offices. The 50 or so shops are a mix of Western-designer and local outlets and include high-level offerings at the Villa Moda department store. There are also two cafes and three restaurants. Saturday-Thursday 10 am-10 pm, Friday 2-10 pm. Sheikh Zayed Road (Emirates Towers), Dubai. Phone 04-330-0000. <http://www.boulevarddubai.com>.

Ibn Battuta Mall

This retail giant caused quite a stir when it opened—it has six mini-mall areas with international themes (China, India, Persia, Egypt, Tunisia and Andalucia) plus activities such as Sky Dubai, an indoor hot-air balloon. Anchor shops are Debenhams, Magrudys, Paris Gallery, Geant and H&M. Sunday-Wednesday 10 am-10 pm, Thursday-Saturday 10 am-midnight. Sheikh Zayed Road (between Interchanges 4 and 5), Dubai. Phone 04-362-1900. <http://www.ibnbattutamall.com>.

Mall of the Emirates

One of the largest malls in the Middle East and home to more than 560 major stores, with a particular emphasis on fashion and furnishings. You can also rent equipment and go for a swift ski at SkiDubai, one of the largest indoor snow parks in the world. Saturday-Wednesday 10 am-10 pm, Thursday-Friday 10 am-midnight. Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai. <http://www.malloftheemirates.com>.

Mercato Mall

Mercato Mall is built in a Renaissance style, with a beautiful facade and a glass roof that lets the sun shine down on shoppers. It's a cozy mall with enough shops to keep every age group busy—there's a cinema complex, children's area and a good sprinkling of restaurants. Not too big and therefore friendly, personal and manageable. Daily 10 am-10 pm. Phone 04-344-4161. <http://www.mercatoshoppingmall.com>.

Mirdif City Centre

Not far from the airport, this latest addition to Dubai's malls is a favorite with locals and visitors alike. Walkable, with specialty restaurants as well as more generic food halls tucked away, the mall offers designer, high street and individual shopping, all on a not-too-overwhelming scale. Saturday-Wednesday 10 am-10 pm, Thursday and Friday 10 am-midnight. Phone 04-800-6422. <http://www.mirdifcitycentre.com>.

Souk Al Bahar

Just across the man-made waterway from The Dubai Mall sits this charming Arabic-themed center, filled with several quirky shops and tailors, and plenty of excellent restaurants and bars, many providing a view of the Burj Khalifa or Dubai Fountain. <http://www.soukalbahar.ae>.

The Village Mall

Yes, it is called a mall, though it is really a small handful of select individual boutiques held together by a roof and some cafes thrown in the mix. Check out Dubai's favorite individual boutique S*uce and local dress designer Ayesha Depala's fancy shop, then stop for a cupcake at Sugar Daddy's. Saturday-Thursday 10 am-10 pm, Friday 4-10 pm. Jumeirah Beach Road, Dubai. Phone 04-349-4444.

Wafi Mall

Part of the Wafi complex, which is constantly adding new restaurants, shops and entertainment to its empire. Lots of designer stores. You can leave the children in the Encounter Zone while you shop. Wafi is also renowned for its amazing store displays at such holidays as Christmas, Ramadan and Eid Al Fitr. Saturday-Thursday 10 am-10 pm, Friday 5:30-10 pm. Al Garhoud Bridge Road, Wafi City, Oud Al Metha, Dubai. Phone 04-324-4555. <http://www.wafi.com>.

SPECIALTY STORES

Bambah

A retro clothing and accessories shop that looks and feels like an illicit treasure chest. Set in an individual villa, it is a far cry from other mall shops. Jumeirah Beach Road (opposite Dubai Zoo), Dubai. Phone 04-349-5585. <http://bambah.com/index.php>.

Falaknaz The Warehouse

Beautiful carved furniture and ornaments for the house, all imported from Indonesia. Look for intricately carved birdcages, unusual lanterns, and bowls made from a mix of clay and woven raffia. Reasonable prices and a free gift-wrapping service. Saturday-Thursday 9 am-7 pm, Friday 10 am-8 pm. Sheikh Zayed Road (Jumeirah Plaza), Jumeirah, Dubai. Phone 04-328-5859. <http://www.falaknazthewarehouse.com>.

Galleries Lafayette

The Parisian institution brings everything French and chic to Dubai Mall, from top designers to quirky home-decor items, and a fabulous gourmet destination. Sunday-Wednesday 10 am-10 pm, Thursday-Saturday 10 am-midnight. The Dubai Mall, Dubai. Phone 04-339-9933. <http://www.gallerieslafayette-dubai.com/En/Pages/Galleries%20Lafayette.aspx>.

O De Rose

Knickknacks, trinkets, accessories, housewares and select furniture are all offered in this stand-alone quirky boutique, compete with a hideaway in the shaded garden. 999 Al Wasl Road (opposite Choithram supermarket), Dubai. Phone 04-348-7990. <http://www.o-derose.com>.

Pride of Kashmir

A great place to buy Turkish, Kashmiri or Iranian rugs. The company has three locations across Dubai. The offerings are outstanding, and they're reasonably priced, considering the quality. Saturday-Wednesday 10 am-10 pm, Thursday and Friday 10 am-11 pm. Souk Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai. Phone 04-368-6110. <http://prideofkashmir.com>.

The One

One of Dubai's few homegrown brands, The One is a furnishings store much favored by affluent villa dwellers. Selling chunky wood furniture, sleek bedding, candlesticks, vases and all the paraphernalia of the stylish modern home, it's a real gem of a place. There's also an excellent restaurant on the second floor. Additional locations in Mall of the Emirates, Wafi and Bur Juman Centre. Saturday-Thursday 9 am-10 pm, Friday 2-10 pm. Jumeirah Beach Road, Dubai. Phone 04-345-6687. <http://www.theone.com>.

Wafi Gourmet

A good place to stock up on local food specialties. The shelves are laden with Arabic sweets and pastries; stuffed vine leaves, tabbouleh and hummus; sacks of herbs and spices; and jars of plump olives in all shades of green and black. The produce is beautifully packaged and makes excellent gifts, and there are delicious, freshly made sweets. Most of the items are priced by weight. The store extends into a coffee bar and a terrace restaurant, and there's an excellent delicatessen serving hot and cold food. The possibilities and choices are endless—simply point and have it served to you. Daily 9 am-midnight. Wafi City, Garhoud Bridge Road, Oud al-Metha, Dubai. Phone 04-324-4433. <http://www.wafigourmet.com>.

DINING OVERVIEW

With Dubai's diverse population, it's not surprising that the city has a wide range of dining options, covering everything from Thai to Tunisian. A good number of the best-quality restaurants are in hotels, but they are expensive, so be prepared to break the bank. There are also quite a few good mom-and-pop places, particularly Indian and Pakistani joints.

Traditional Emirati cooking consists primarily of dates, fresh and dried fish, and both camel meat and milk—not terribly appealing to most Westerners. (Be sure to try Dubai's fresh dates, though—they're soft, succulent and delicious.) Outside of Emirati homes, it's difficult to get a taste of local cuisine, although some restaurants do have a few traditional dishes.

Most Arabic restaurants draw on Lebanese cuisine instead, with grilled meats and meze (appetizer-sized small portions of salads, meats and dips). There are also literally hundreds of stands around the city that serve *shawarma* (pita-style flatbread filled with shaved lamb or chicken roasted on a spit), hummus, salad and pickles. They're good for a quick, inexpensive snack.

Dinner is usually a late affair: Tables start to fill up around 9 pm. Friday brunch is an institution in Dubai, and competition is fierce among the providers of all-you-can-eat (and drink) buffets, many with alcohol included. Some restaurants even throw in entertainment for children. In cooler weather, alfresco dining is popular, whether on a terrace, a rooftop or at the beach.

Expect to pay the following for a dinner for one, excluding drinks, tax and tip: \$ = less than 50 AED; \$\$ = 50 AED-200 AED; \$\$\$ = 201 AED-300 AED; \$\$\$\$ = more than 300 AED.

LOCAL & REGIONAL

Al Arrab

Conveniently located in the Persian Court of the Ibn Batutta Mall, this Arabian restaurant is a great place to wind down after a day of shopping. Try the Al Arrab grill for a variety of grilled and skewered meats for sampling and sharing. The thyme chicken tikka is also excellent. Most portions are big enough to share. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Phone 04-363-6568. .

Address

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Phone

04-363-6568

Ewaan

An excellent Arabian restaurant with lovely ambience and decor set at The Palace Downtown Dubai hotel. Food is buffet-style, allowing you to sample everything on offer. After 9 pm there is usually belly dancing and an oud player. \$\$\$\$. Mohammed Bin Rashid Boulevard (in The Palace Downtown Dubai), Dubai. Phone 04-888-3444. .

Address

Mohammed Bin Rashid Boulevard
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Phone

04-888-3444

Fakhreldine

Exquisite and authentic Lebanese food served in stunning surroundings with live music, *shisha* pipes and belly dancers. Grilled meats and fish, hot and cold meze, and Lebanese desserts. Daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 19th Street (Moevenpick Hotel Bur Dubai, Umm Hurair 2, behind Eppco headquarters), Dubai. Phone 04-336-6000. .

Address

19th Street
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Phone

04-336-6000

Dining: Overview

Kan Zaman

An enormous outdoor seating area, decent grills and excellent *shisha* form the backbone of the Kan Zaman experience. Service is lacking when it gets crowded, but you do eventually get noticed. The authentic Emirati dishes (try bowls of *dango* chickpeas with lemon and butter) are nice additions. Select Western dishes are also available, as are great fresh fruit juices. Daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Shindagha (at the Heritage Village), Dubai. Phone 04-393-9913.

Address

Shindagha
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Phone

04-393-9913

Piccolo Mondo Bay

Flanked by skyscrapers, this patio-resto deservedly has a great shisha lounge and serves a fusion of Arabian and international cuisine. It's an ideal spot for fussy eaters who might not want to devote themselves entirely to Arabic food. A nice selection of Italian and Thai is on the menu. Daily from 9 am. Marina Tower, Dubai Marina, Dubai. Phone 04-447-5449.

Address

Marina Tower, Dubai Marina
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Phone

04-447-5449

Shabestan

Shabestan offers a gourmet taste of Persia. The fresh-baked bread is worth the trip alone, and the aromatic grills and authentic decor round things off to perfection. Slow-cooked lamb with rice is a house specialty. Live music entertains. Daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Baniyas Street (in the Radisson Blu Hotel, Dubai Deira Creek), Dubai. Phone 04-222-7171.

Address

Baniyas Street
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Phone

04-222-7171

ETIQUETTE

Dubai is the most relaxed of all the emirates, but it's also a traditional Muslim society. The emirate is aware of its tourists and their needs to wear relaxed and cool clothes, but visitors and residents alike are encouraged to at least cover up a little when entering public places and shopping malls. It is suggested that you cover your shoulders, not the entire arm, and aim to wear shorts or skirts that hit around the knee. It is simply polite in a society where bare flesh is frowned upon. Men are also expected to dress decently and appropriately (sleeveless shirts and tank tops are bad ideas), but there are no strict rules. Shorts, bathing suits and bikinis are fine in hotel pool areas and at private beaches, but topless sunbathing for women is definitely a no-no, and one-piece bathing suits are recommended on public beaches.

Muslims fast during the holy month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. The dates change slightly each year depending on the sighting of the new moon. As a sign of respect, non-Muslims are also required by law to refrain from eating, drinking, chewing gum, dancing, singing and smoking in public places during daylight hours. Much of the city shuts down during this time (food and drink outlets are closed in the day, except select ones in hotels), so keep this in mind if your planned visit coincides with Ramadan. However, the city comes to life in the evenings, when all the restaurants reopen with extended working hours into the night.

Friday is the official day of rest and prayer for this Muslim city. Thursday and Friday used to be the official weekend days—the equivalent of Saturday and Sunday in other countries. To facilitate efficiency with other parts of the world, however, the government changed the weekend to Friday and Saturday. Thus, Sunday is a working day in Dubai, which is a bit of a shift for most Westerners.

As Dubai is a Muslim country, the government does not encourage alcohol consumption, but its international approach means that alcohol is still available to non-Muslims. It is served only in restaurants linked to hotels and in the few free-standing restaurants that have managed to secure the necessary license. There are only two retail suppliers for alcohol, MMI and African Eastern, with outlets conveniently but discreetly located around the city. To purchase from these shops, you must have an alcohol license, which is available only to residents working in Dubai. There is also a 30% tax on retail alcohol, so do make use of the airport duty-free zone to do your bottle shopping upon arrival in the U.A.E. You are allowed to take four liters into the country with you.

PERSONAL SAFETY

Western expats often claim that they feel far safer in Dubai than they do in their home cities, and abuse or threats stemming from U.S. and British involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan are virtually unheard of.

With regard to nonpolitical hazards, Dubai officials boast that their city is crime-free, but it's still a good idea to take commonsense precautions. Many of the people in Dubai are very poor, and petty thievery does occur occasionally, so don't let your guard down. It can occur anywhere, but especially stay away from the poorer neighborhoods. Always carry a copy of your passport and visa, particularly at night, in case Dubai's vigilant police ask to see them.

Dubai is perfectly safe during the day, but women traveling alone at night should be prepared for occasional harassment, when parts of the city turn into unofficial red-light zones. Keep your common sense with you, don't dress too provocatively and try not to stray into quiet areas. Always keep an eye on handbags, especially in crowded bars and shopping areas. Man or woman, you should never travel alone in the desert—it's always best to go with a local tour operator or at least in two cars, because even if your off-road skills are excellent, getting stuck on a dune is very common.

Because of its Muslim roots, Dubai is not a gay-friendly destination, and public homosexual behavior could result in prosecution. Public displays of affection are frowned upon, even illegal between men and women, so try to refrain from kissing or even holding hands in public (however, even though homosexuality is illegal, men holding hands is a very common sight).

For more information, contact your country's travel-advisory agency.

HEALTH

Dubai has a wide range of excellent hospitals, covering many specializations. Depending on your emergency, you should seek out the major hospitals, such as Rashid Hospital or the American Hospital, where they are equipped to deal with true accidents and emergencies. Many private clinics call themselves hospitals, but few have triage departments and are ill-equipped to see you if you have a bleeding cut or broken bone.

Sanitation is generally excellent in the main tourist areas of the city; the less touristy parts of town are a bit more basic. Tap water is considered safe, but most people drink bottled water. Food in hotels and most restaurants is quite safe to eat. Be a little more wary of food sold from street vendors: Steer clear of outdoor buffets, where food might have been sitting in the hot sun for too long—this is the most common cause of food poisoning in Dubai.

Vaccinations are not required if you're staying in the city or traveling with a recognized tour operator, but if you're going to visit desolate desert villages on your own, it would be wise to have a cholera vaccination. If you travel into the desert, be sure to take toilet paper, lots of bottled water and soap—facilities are scarce.

One of the biggest health dangers in Dubai is the sun: Make sure you stock up on sunblock. Pack a hat, sunglasses, long-sleeved shirts and pants, and remember to drink plenty of water. If you're planning to travel in the mountainous areas of the country, you may want to consider mosquito repellent and possibly malaria medication, though there have been no reported cases of malaria in Dubai or the Emirates.

Medical facilities in Dubai are excellent but extremely expensive. Make sure you have health insurance and/or travel health insurance to cover any costs. Most medical and emergency personnel speak English. Four- and five-star hotels usually have English-speaking doctors on 24-hour call. In smaller hotels, the concierge will be able to arrange medical assistance from the nearest hospital (there are 26 located throughout the city). Dial 998 or 999 for ambulance and emergency services. The American Hospital Dubai (phone 04-377-6699, <http://www.ahdubai.com/main/index.aspx>) offers 24-hour emergency services, inpatient and outpatient facilities, including family medicine and dental.

If you'd prefer your medical care to come to you, House Calls: Dubai Healthcare City is available daily 24 hours. Phone 800-HEALTH (432584). <http://www.dhcc.ae>.

For more information, contact your country's health-advisory agency.

DISABLED ADVISORY

Dubai is surprisingly well-equipped when it comes to visitors with physical limitations, with all shopping malls and main hotels offering dedicated parking, easy access, lifts, ramps and accessible restrooms throughout. The Dubai Metro and the buses are fully equipped to cater to visitors with disabilities, and special taxis can be ordered to fit wheelchairs (phone 04-208-0808).

The airport terminal has electric carts and wheelchairs available, and some of the bigger four- and five-star hotels have specially designed rooms for guests with special needs. All shopping malls have ramps and elevators, and you'll find the staff generally very helpful. Older sites are not accessible to people with disabilities. Most people in Dubai are willing to help if needed.

DOS & DON'TS

Do tip generously in bars, restaurants and taxis for good service—waiters and drivers are paid a pittance and are hugely appreciative of the extra cash. But be sure to check if the establishment you are visiting incorporates the tip into the billed price, as some automatically do.

Do greet Gulf Arabs with a friendly "*salaam aleikum*." They will appreciate the gesture and be far more likely to chat with you or help you out.

Don't try to initiate conversations with Gulf Arabs about or with female members of their family, the legitimacy of

their political system or the situation in Israel—these are all flashpoint subjects that could quickly sour the atmosphere.

Don't try to shake hands with female Emiratis if you're a man. They will usually refuse to do so, leaving you with your hand extended and looking foolish. Only offer your hand if she first extends hers.

Do ask permission before taking pictures of locals or other people; many cultures are very sensitive to having their photo taken.

Do steer clear of illegal drugs—Dubai's drug policy is unrelentingly harsh, and anyone caught in possession of or with even a trace of drugs in the bloodstream is liable to receive a prison sentence of several years.

Don't kiss your partner in public—it's illegal in parts of the U.A.E. and could earn you a scolding from police or even lead to arrest. There have been several high-profile incidents that have led to jail terms for those involved. Other signs of affection are discouraged too—it's best just to keep your hands to yourself.

Do use public transport—it gives you an entirely different perspective of the city; it's cheap and safe; and it allows you to feel like one of the myriad people who live and work in Dubai instead of being a visitor in a taxi looking in from the outside.

Don't lose your temper and gesture with your middle finger. This is a hundred times more offensive in Arab than in Western cultures and could lead to imprisonment.

Do avoid any public displays of drunkenness. It only takes one local to see you and get upset and you could land in trouble with the police. It is illegal to drink anywhere outside licensed premises, so also avoid carrying any alcohol you may have purchased in the hotel.

Geostats

Passport/Visa Requirements: Citizens of the U.S. and Canada need passports valid for at least six months. Americans and Canadians arriving in the U.A.E. will receive an automatic 60-day-visit visa on arrival. Those wishing to stay longer should be able to extend for up to an additional 60 days but should confirm details with their appropriate embassy or consulate. Charges will apply.

Those intending to take up employment in the U.A.E. should seek advice from the U.A.E. embassies in Washington, D.C., or Montreal, remembering that an offer of employment letter from a U.A.E. sponsor will be required. All foreigners planning to work or live in the U.A.E. will be tested for HIV, and those found to be HIV positive will immediately be deported. HIV certificates issued by foreign medical authorities are not accepted.

U.S. and Canadian citizens may face significant delays or be denied entry altogether when trying to enter or transit U.A.E. if their passport contains a valid or expired Israeli visa or stamps. Holders of Israeli passports will be denied entry to the U.A.E.

Reconfirm travel document requirements with carrier before departure.

Population: 1,978,377.

Languages: Arabic, Persian, English, Hindi, Urdu, Tagalog, Farsi. English is more widely spoken than Arabic.

Time Zone: 4 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (+4 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is not observed.

Voltage Requirements: 220/240.

Telephone Codes: 971, country code; 4, city code;

Currency Exchange

The currency of the U.A.E. is the dirham, and it is linked to the U.S. dollar.

Currency-exchange bureaus are the best places to exchange money. They can be found all over the city and are usually open until 8:30 pm. Try to avoid exchanging your money in banks or hotels because they don't offer the most competitive rates. You can withdraw local currency from ATMs all over the city. These are conveniently scattered everywhere around the city, and you'll always find one in major shopping centers and in or near supermarkets. Avoid traveler's checks, as these are not as easily dealt with.

Be aware that as Dubai becomes more popular with global tourists, prices continue to rise.

Banks are generally open Saturday-Wednesday 8 am-1 pm and Thursday 8 am-noon. Currency-exchange bureaus stay open until later in the evening.

Taxes

There are a number of tax-free zones in Dubai, but overall taxes run the gamut. On most services and entertainment there is a 5% tax, which is already included in the price. In most restaurants there is a 15% tax added for service to your bill. Alcohol carries a 30% sales tax. Dubai has introduced a tourism tax called the Tourism Dirham, which went into effect in 2014. Depending on the accommodations, the tax ranges 7 AED-20 AED nightly. The Dubai Government reports that the revenue will support marketing and tourism initiatives.

Tipping

Where service charges are not included in a bill, a 10% tip for hotel bellhops, restaurant waitstaff and taxi drivers is appreciated, but not required.

Weather

Dubai has a subtropical, arid climate, with lots of sunshine and blue skies for most of the year. Rainfall is infrequent—mostly during the winter months—but it often results in flash flooding, as the city's draining system is inadequate. Temperatures range from a low of about 50 F/10 C to a high of 118 F/48 C. The best time to visit Dubai is during the winter months, November-March. April and May are still pleasant, although it will be warming up. Summers are hot and humid and worth avoiding if at all possible.

What to Wear

Lightweight summer clothes are suitable for most of the year, but it's a good idea to pack a light jacket or sweater because the air-conditioning in restaurants and cinemas can be pretty powerful. In winter, it can cool down tremendously in the evenings, so a heavier jacket is necessary if you are out in the desert or dining alfresco. In summer, take along a few more underclothes and T-shirts as you'll likely go through a few changes of clothes in a day because of the excessive heat and humidity.

Sunscreen, hats, sunglasses, long-sleeved T-shirts and light pants are all essentials for protection from the sun—particularly in the summer months or if you're planning on heading into the desert. A pair of flip-flops for the beach is a must because the sand is too hot to walk on most of the year. Few restaurants have strict dress codes, but most frown on flip-flops or shorts.

Despite the heat, business dress is of the formal suit-and-tie variety. Women should wear pantsuits or modest skirts.

Women may want to take along a shawl to cover up if needed in a traditional area.

Telephone

All phone calls within the emirate of Dubai are considered local calls, but still require you to dial the prefix 04. To call a number in another emirate, dial the city code first (beginning with a 0) and then the number. To call a Dubai number from outside the U.A.E., dial your country's international access code, then the country code for the U.A.E., 971, then Dubai's city code, 4, followed by the local number. Toll-free numbers begin with 800.

Pay phones are going the way of the dodo bird and are getting harder to find, especially in this heavily blinged oil-rich city. The ones you do find will most likely be abandoned or vandalized. Your best bet remains the airport and some hotel lobbies. For most public phones you'll need a prepaid phone card, which can be bought in shops, supermarkets and Etisalat offices. Useful numbers include 100 (international operator) and 181 (directory assistance, with a charge for each call). There are two telecommunications providers in Dubai, the Emirates Telecommunications Corporation, known more commonly as Etisalat, and du. It is possible to pick up a pay-as-you-go SIM card from either Etisalat or du from one of their many booths and shops around town.

Cell phone numbers in Dubai begin with 50, 55 or 56 followed by the seven-digit number. Cell phone coverage is generally good throughout Dubai—and even into the surrounding and more remote regions—and dropped calls are rare.

Internet Access

The country's biggest Internet company, Etisalat, boasts the highest connection speeds in the UAE. The company also has Wi-Fi hot spots known as iZones in central locations like shopping malls, *shisha* places, restaurants and cafes such as Starbucks. You can use them by purchasing a prepaid card (15 AED an hour). Even though companies such as Oracle, Microsoft and Cisco have all built headquarters in Dubai's "Internet City", it's been reported that the UAE government is monitoring Internet traffic.

The best Internet cafes are on Dhiyafah Street in Satwa, Dubai's popular cafe strip on the Bur Dubai side of the Creek. Bank Street, also in Bur Dubai, has a number of Internet cafes as well. They are usually open daily 8 am-10 pm; they're especially busy in the afternoon after school gets out and during holidays.

Many hotels have Internet connections available for their guests, and most shopping centers have at least one Internet cafe that is open daily, and plenty of cafes give you free access to Wi-Fi for the price of a coffee.

Internet keys are available from Etisalat and Du, but cost generally several hundred dirhams, so you'd be better advised to seek out free Wi-Fi cafes or mall areas.

Mail & Package Services

There is no direct postal service delivery to addresses currently operating in Dubai. Residents have their mail delivered to post office boxes. You may have difficulty finding a postal box or postage stamps. Hallmark stores generally carry stamps, as well as some grocery stores. Postage from Dubai is expensive, and delivery to locals is infrequent. It takes roughly two weeks for delivery to North America.

Post Office

The main Post Office, in Karama, is open Saturday-Wednesday 8 am-midnight and Thursday 8 am-10 pm. Smaller post offices are located conveniently around the city. Zabeel Road, Karama, Dubai. Phone 337-1500.

Address

Zabeel Road, Karama
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Phone

337-1500

Newspapers & Magazines

Gulf News, *Gulf Today* and *Khaleej Times* are the daily English-language newspapers in Dubai, although Abu Dhabi's *The National* is widely read and available. Most of the international daily newspapers are available in Dubai, costing about double the price of local papers, but they are usually a few days behind their publication date. Newspapers and magazines are available from all supermarkets, bookstores and most hotel shops.

Time Out is a weekly entertainment guide available for purchase in most hotels, supermarkets and bookshops. You'll often find a complimentary copy in your room at high-end hotels. It's worth picking up a copy to find out about entertainment and restaurants.

There are several guide magazines available through hotels and tourist outlets only. Some good ones are *Concierge* and *In Dubai*. *Dubai Explorer* is a comprehensive leisure guide published annually. It covers dining, nightlife, sports, shopping and lots more. It is available in bookshops and supermarkets. *7 Days* is a free daily that gives information about upcoming local events as well as world news. Available in most coffee shops or online at <https://7daysindubai.com>.

One expense you might find worthwhile is that of the *Entertainer* (<https://www.theentertainerme.com/Dubai-N-Emirates/products>). Essentially a coupon book, the price is high, some 395 AED, but for a family of four, the cost can be recouped with one visit to Wild Wadi. Plus you get plenty of two-for-one deals on fast-food outlets, cafes, other attractions such as Sega Republic, and more. It might not be worth the expense for a couple. There is also a fine-dining and spa version of the *Entertainer*, so that may also be worth looking at as well. Available as a download on Android or Mac mobile devices.

Transportation

The best ways to get around Dubai are by taxi or the Dubai Metro, which links the airport area with the other end of town, towards Jebel Ali, with plenty of stops in between. There is also a local bus service, but buses can be crowded at rush hours and are not always on time because of detours and delays caused by construction projects.

Walking is a good option in certain areas, such as along the Creek or in the souks, but the weather is generally too hot for you to cover long distances on foot in summer, and the city is not designed for pedestrians.

Air

Dubai International Airport (DXB) is 3 mi/5 km southeast of the city. It's an ultramodern place with an award-winning duty-free area that stocks jewelry, electronic items, perfume and even cars (but only as raffle prizes). Note that the Dubai airport has eye-scan technology that is used on individuals whose passports raise concern from customs officials. Once you've cleared the usual international security procedures, you can kill time shopping, drinking in the Irish Village pub or sipping coffee at the numerous cafes.

The airport's Terminal 3, used solely by Emirates Airlines, is a huge, clean and efficient space. It is complemented by Al Maktoum International Airport, a new 54-sq-mi/66,000-sq-m facility which recently completed the construction of its first phase. Once completed (tentatively scheduled for 2027), this state-of-the-art international airport will have the capacity to process 160 million passengers and will be considered the world's largest airport. <http://www.dubaiairport.com>.

Abu Dhabi International Airport, only a 90-minute drive away, is also an option for those wishing to get to the U.A.E. and Dubai. Extensive renovations have been done to this airport as well. Etihad Airways flies in and out of Abu Dhabi, and it is less congested and easier to navigate than the Dubai airport. Etihad offers bus connections to and from Dubai for its passengers. <http://www.abudhabiairport.ae>.

Connecting Transportation

Best way:

Dubai has VIP luxury cabs and its slogan, "a new meaning for luxury in transport," means just that (phone 04-208-0808). The meter starts at 50 AED. The Dubai Taxi Corporation is the official government-run taxi service at the airport. Available 24/7, these cabs can be found outside the terminal arrival areas. The meter starts at 25 AED and then costs 1.75 AED for every kilometer until you reach your destination. Expect to pay around 94 AED but fare prices vary depending on traffic and location of hotel. <http://dubai-taxi.com>

Other ways:

The Dubai Metro links all three terminals at the airport with the major spots in town, including the Mall of the Emirates, Deira City Centre and the Dubai International Financial Centre. Fares range 2 AED-11.60 AED, and an all-day standard-class ticket is 14 AED.

Rental car companies have booths at the airport. The legal driving age is 18 years, and you can drive with valid driver's licenses from the EU, U.K. and U.S., but check with the rental company if you have a driver's license issued in other countries. Most of the more expensive hotels have airport shuttles, although you may have to arrange transport at the time of booking.

There are buses from the airport that travel to most areas of the city, but the timetable can be difficult to understand.

Car

Dubai has an impressive system of roads, and ample signage directs you to different parts of the city (blue and green signs indicate main areas, brown signs indicate heritage sites and places of interest). Driving is on the right side of the road. Seat belts must be worn in the front seat. Speed limits are about 62 mph/100 kph on the main highways and about 37 mph/60 kph in the city. Be aware that the city has one of the world's highest per-capita death rates because of traffic accidents. Speeding and erratic driving are very common. Photo radar cameras can be seen on most major highways, so watch your speed. Fines are stiff.

The legal minimum age for driving 17 years. For car rentals, the minimum age is 21. Seatbelts are mandatory and should be worn at all times. It is illegal to use a mobile phone while driving.

Parking is readily available around the city, but keep an eye out for municipal lots where you have to pay to park. They are marked with orange signs. Generally, parking is free 1-4 pm; it's also free on Friday.

Ferry

Within the city, small boats called *abras* ferry passengers across the Creek. There are two stations on the Deira side and one on the Bur Dubai side. A 10-minute trip from one side to the other generally costs 1 AED. The *abras* operate 5:30 am-1 am daily except Friday, when the first trip sets off after morning prayers are over.

Public Transportation

More than 30 bus routes crisscross the emirate. Service has much improved in recent years, with buses and bus stops being air conditioned and offering time tables that are more or less accurate, depending on traffic. The Deira station is near the Gold Souk, and the Bur Dubai station is near Plaza Cinema on Ghubaiba Road.

Dubai Metro

Opened with great fanfare in 2009, the Dubai Metro links various parts of the city that previously were only reachable by tedious car journey. Driverless and fully automated, the Dubai Metro is made up of two lines—Red and Green. All trains and stations are air conditioned. The Red line goes from Al Rashadiya to Jebel Ali, with 27 stops in between, including the Mall of the Emirates, Burj Khalifa, Deira City Centre and Dubai International Airport. The Green line runs from Al Qusais to Al Jaddaf and has 20 fully operational stations. The metro is an efficient and inexpensive way to see the city, with taxi stops near the stations. Prices range 2 AED-11.60 AED for Gold Class tickets across all zones. <http://dubaimetro.eu>.

Address

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Ship

Cruise ships call at the Port Rashid terminal in Jebel Ali.

Taxi

Your best bet for transportation in Dubai is to hire a taxi, as the roads can be chaotic and accident rates are high. Reputable companies include Dubai Taxi (phone 04-208-0000) and National Taxi (phone 04-339-0002). Most malls have their own taxi ranks brimming with waiting cabs.

If you are a woman traveling alone, call Dubai Taxi and ask for a pink taxi, which is dedicated to women and families, with female drivers. You will also spot them at the airport taxi rank and more rarely at shopping mall ranks.

Dubai Transport Company (Dubai Taxi)

This is the most common and reliable taxi service. Phone bookings are accepted and very efficient. These cream-colored, metered taxis are run by a government franchise. Most drivers speak English and know all the local landmarks. It's also helpful to know the name of a nearby landmark rather than a street name, because the streets are often called something other than the official name. Fares are calculated on a meter (standard minimum charge is 10 AED), which is switched on when you enter the taxi; all cars are marked with a reference number in case you run into any difficulties. You can hail a taxi on the street or call and arrange to have one pick you up. Phone 04-208-0000. <http://dct.dubai.ae/en/Pages/default.aspx>.

Address

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Phone

04-208-0000

Additional Reading

Dubai: Gateway to the Gulf by Ian Fairservice (Motivate Publishing). This book is full of current information, good photos and easy-to-understand text.

Dubai Cultural Guide (Dubai Cultural Council). This 225-page coffee-table book encapsulates the ever-changing artistic movement in Dubai. Available in local bookstores.

Tourist Offices

Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing

Information and brochures on the tourist attractions and facilities in Dubai. Sunday-Thursday 7:30 am-2:30 pm, closed Friday and Saturday. Baniyas Street (National Bank of Dubai Building, 10th-13th floors), Deira, Dubai. Phone 04-223-0000. <http://www.dubaitourism.ae>.

Address

Baniyas Street
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Phone

04-223-0000

Calendar

Dubai's calendar runs the gamut from glittering international golf tournaments and horse races to local camel races. Check local publications such as *Time Out* (<http://www.timeoutdubai.com>) or with your hotel's concierge for details of current happenings around town—events often occur with very short notice.

Many people visit the city with shopping in mind, so February's Dubai Shopping Festival may be a draw for some—others may want to avoid the chaos.

For detailed information about upcoming events in the Dubai area, contact the Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing. Phone 282-1111. <http://www.dubaitourism.ae>.

If you're dialing the Dubai phone numbers listed in this calendar from outside the United Arab Emirates, you must first dial your country's international access code, then the United Arab Emirates' country code, 971, then Dubai's city code, 4.

Information in this calendar is subject to change and should be confirmed.

October

15 Oct—Al-Hijra Islamic New Year's Day.

Late October—Abu Dhabi Film Festival More than 1.6 million people attend this celebration of all types and aspects of cinema. Various venues. Phone 401-1900. <http://www.abudhabifilmfestival.ae>.

Throughout October—Camel Races The wildly popular local races are not to be missed. Wednesday-Friday 7 am and 3 pm. Check local newspapers for more details. Free admission. Al Marmoum Camel Racetrack, Dubai Al Ain Road, Exit 37. For information, call 832-6526. <http://www.dcrc.ae>.

November

Mid-Late November—Horse Races The Meydan Grandstand and Racecourse hosts races on Thursday and some Saturdays, usually starting around 6:30 pm. General admission and parking are free. Dubai Racing Club, off of Al Meydan Road. Phone 327-0077. <http://www.dubairacingclub.com>. Continues through late March 2016

8-12 Nov—Dubai Airshow One of the world's largest air shows draws more than 1,000 exhibitors and 60,000 trade visitors from 60 countries. Participants are split between civilian and military representatives, with large exhibits by the U.S., France, Russia, Boeing Co., Airbus Industries and Lockheed Martin. Dubai World Central. For information, call 603-3300. <http://www.dubaiairshow.aero>.

Late November—Golf The "richest golf tournament in the world" is held on the Greg Norman-designed Earth course at Jumeirah Golf Estates. For information, call 889-8732. <http://www.europeantour.com/europeantour/season=2014/tournamentid=2014092/index.html>

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December

2 Dec—National Day Festival This public holiday is marked by cultural activities throughout the Dubai area. Concerts, music competitions, children's theater performances, fireworks, exhibitions, camel racing, a carnival and traditional markets, cuisine and crafts. Various venues.

2 Dec—National Day Public holiday.

3-5 Dec—Dubai Rugby Sevens An extremely popular event, drawing more than 1,750 players on 150 teams from around the world. Three days of high-action sports also include women's, youth and other tournaments. The big Rugby Rock concert on the last day creates a lively atmosphere that goes on till the wee hours of the morning. The Sevens Stadium, located at the intersection of Dubai-Al Ain Road and Jebel Ali-Lahbab Road. For information, call 321-0008. <http://www.dubairugby7s.com>.

9-12 Dec—Watch and Jewelry Dubai The most prestigious show of its kind in the Middle East displays rare gems and an incredible array of jewelry from at least 25 countries. More than 225 exhibitors and nearly 15,000 public and industry visitors. Dubai World Trade Centre, Trade Centre Road, Karama. For information, call 308-6183. <http://www.jewelleryshow.com>.

9-16 Dec—Dubai International Film Festival A sampling of films not on the normal Hollywood roster. Includes Arabic, computer-animated and Bollywood treats. Various outdoor venues. For information, call 363-3456. <http://www.dubaifilmfest.com>.

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January

Early-Late January—Dubai Shopping Festival One of the biggest events of the year, electrifying the city with concerts, art exhibits, street performers and sports activities. Shopping malls have big sales, and there are rides and shops at every turn and massive fireworks displays each night. Book hotels and flights well in advance—everything fills up early with nearly 2.7 million visitors annually. For more information, call 269-9900. <http://www.mydsf.ae>. Continues through early February

Mid January—Gulf News Overnighter Fun Drive This two-day, four-wheel-drive, off-road jamboree from Dubai to Fujairah is popular with residents and tourists alike. Each day involves about four hours of driving, with marshals providing help and expertise. A wonderful opportunity to see the changing face of the desert and to spend the night at a desert campsite with great food and entertainment, including belly dancing. Only 750 cars are allowed, so booking and car rental (if required) must be arranged well in advance. For information, visit the sponsor website, *Gulf News*. <http://gulfnews.com>.

1 Jan—New Year's Day Public holiday.

Throughout January—Camel Races The wildly popular local races are not to be missed. Wednesday-Friday 7 am and 3 pm. Check local newspapers for more details. Free admission. Al Marmoum Camel Racetrack, Dubai Al Ain Road, Exit 37. For information, call 832-6526. <http://www.dcrc.ae>.

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February

Early February—Dubai Shopping Festival One of the biggest events of the year, electrifying the city with concerts, art exhibits, street performers and sports activities. Shopping malls have big sales, and there are rides and shops at every turn and massive fireworks displays each night. Book hotels and flights well in advance—everything fills up early with nearly 2.7 million visitors annually. For more information, call 269-9900. <http://www.mydsf.ae>. Concludes early February

Early-Late February—Dubai World Cup Carnival Nine weeks of prestigious horse-racing and social events culminate in the Dubai World Cup, one of horse racing's biggest contests. Live music, wine tastings, fashion shows, picnics, family activities and more. Meydan Grandstand and Racecourse, off of Al Meydan Road. For information, call 327-0077. <http://www.dubairacingclub.com>. Continues through late March

Mid-Late February—Tennis At the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships, spectators can watch top players fight it out on court at closer quarters than at other tournaments, with no danger of rain. An ATP International Series Event. Dubai Duty Free Tennis Stadium, on the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Centre grounds. For information and tickets, call 417-2415. <http://www.dubaidutyfreetennischampionships.com>.

1-7 Feb—Golf The premier PGA Dubai Desert Classic draws top European golfers and world stars to compete for US\$2 million. Emirates Golf Club, Sheikh Zayed Road. For information, call 380-2112. <http://www.dubaidesertclassic.com>.

Throughout February—Horse Races The Meydan Grandstand and Racecourse hosts races on Thursday and some Saturdays, usually starting around 6:30 pm. General admission and parking are free. Dubai Racing Club, off of Al Meydan Road. Phone 327-0077. <http://www.dubairacingclub.com>. Continues through late March

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March

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Late March—Horse Races The Dubai World Cup draws horses, jockeys, trainers and owners from all over the world to compete for one of horse racing's richest purses. Meydan Grandstand and Racecourse, off of Al Meydan Road. For information, call 327-0077. <http://www.dubairacingclub.com>.

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August

6 Aug—Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan's Accession Day Public holiday.