

GO

DUBAI

BY KIM-MARIE EVANS

PURE Extravagance



A journey to Dubai, a decidedly modern city with an authentic Bedouin past, is not only safe but extraordinary

DUBAI TIPS

CURRENCY

THE LOCAL CURRENCY IS THE DIRHAM. THE RATE IS ABOUT .27 TO THE U.S. DOLLAR.

LANGUAGE

THERE IS NO LANGUAGE BARRIER. EVERYONE SPEAKS ENGLISH.

DRESS CODE

THOUGH IT'S UNLIKELY YOU'LL BE FINED FOR INAPPROPRIATE CLOTHING, YOU'LL BE MORE COMFORTABLE DRESSED MODESTLY. WOMEN SHOULD COVER THEIR SHOULDERS AND DEFINITELY NO BEACHWEAR OFF THE SAND.

CALENDAR

THE WEEKENDS IN DUBAI ARE THURSDAY THROUGH SATURDAY. WORK STARTS AGAIN ON SUNDAY. FRIDAY IS THE BUSIEST DAY FOR BRUNCH AND SHOPPING.

ROAD RULES

DRINKING AND DRIVING IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED. TAKE A CAB EVEN IF YOU'VE ONLY HAD ONE GLASS OF WINE.

WHEN TO GO

BEST TIME TO TRAVEL FOR COMFORT IS NOVEMBER THROUGH MARCH. WHEN TEMPERATURES HOVER IN THE 70S TO 80S. BEST TIME TO TRAVEL FOR SAVINGS IS THE SUMMER, WHEN TEMPS VERGE ON THE UNBEARABLE AND HOTELS CAN BE HAD AT ALMOST HALF PRICE.

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TRIP ADVISOR

From the flight to the accommodations, there's plenty to love

WHY GO

One of the hottest destinations right now is Dubai. This glittering gem in the United Arab Emirates is a study in contrasts. The most liberal city in the Arabian Peninsula is at once ancient and futuristic. Its Bedouin traditions and abaya-clad locals coexist with soaring architectural marvels of glass and steel. Energy crackles through the city streets, and the proverbial scent of money permeates the air. Situated within eight flying hours of two-thirds of the world's population and dubbed "la la land" by local expats, Dubai is sure to be at the top of must-visit lists for decades to come.

GETTING THERE

This is half the fun, as Emirates airlines has cornered the market on upscale aviation. A direct flight from New York's JFK takes fourteen hours, but with a fully flat bed in business class and a stand-up cocktail bar at the back of the cabin, you'll never notice. Business class not slick

enough for you? Upgrade to first and you can take a hot shower at 30,000 feet.

WHERE TO STAY

Though the world famous **BURJ AL ARAB** hotel has declared itself a seven-star resort (no such designation truly exists), the brand-new **FOUR SEASONS** is the place to stay. This recently opened oasis feels as if it has stood watch over its stretch of private beach for decades. In a city that clamors to make each new property bigger, better and glitzier, the Four Seasons outdoes them all with brilliantly understated luxury—enough to make a billionaire blush. From gold tiled walls to horseshoe arches, the interiors are Islamic architecture meets beachfront posh. It boasts the largest standard rooms in town, and rates start at around \$800 per night.

FOUR SEASONS

STUNNING VIEWS AND LUXURIOUS ABUNDANCE ARE THE HALLMARKS



BURJ AL ARAB

THE MASTER BEDROOM OF THE ICONIC HOTEL'S (LEFT) DIPLOMATIC SUITE

WHERE TO EAT

Brunch is a big deal here, and all brunches feature liberal amounts of champagne. Legally, alcohol can only be served in hotels; luckily there are hundreds and hundreds of hotels, all with restaurants stocked with every brand of champagne available. The Grand Friday Brunch at **MINA A'SALAM** is spread across three restaurants in the middle of the picturesque **MADINAT JUMEIRAH**—a man-made eighty-acre resort with two grand boutique hotels (soon to be a third), a collection of summer houses, private beachfront and semi-traditional souks. Guests journey from one attraction to the next aboard wooden *abras* that troll the canals around the property; this has led some to call it a Disneyesque re-creation of Arabia.

Treat your inner Anthony Bourdain to a camel burger at the Local House. Generally reserved for special occasions, camel meat is a local delicacy. This famously tough meat tastes nothing like chicken. If a camel burger is too exotic, try a chocolate bar made from camel's milk. Join the "it" crowd for dinner with a million-dollar view at **MADINAT'S PIERCHIC**. This glam eatery is perched over the Arabian Sea at the edge of the pier in the shadow of the iconic sail-shaped **BURJ AL ARAB** hotel. Taking a page from Paris, the Burj twinkles at night much like the Eiffel Tower.

CULTURE SHOCK

Things rarely happen on time here; lunch plans and even weddings start when they start "inshallah" (God willing).



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What to Do

MAN VS. NATURE

It's no secret that Dubai boasts an over-the-top level of decadence and excess, but it also offers majestic views and once-in-a-lifetime excursions (think galloping through the desert on an Arabian horse). Here, just a few of the must-see and must-do attractions

THE MALLS

The shopping malls are about far more than shopping. You can do everything from hit the slopes to scuba dive with sharks at these over-the-top retail conglomerates. **DUBAI MALL** has been billed as the largest mall on the planet. But not everything in Dubai is quite so modern; it has a lively old quarter that is home to a seventeenth-century British fort.



THE WATER

Head to the old town and take a ride down the creek (**AL KHOR**) in a traditional wooden *abra*. Watch the modern gypsum houses drift by on one side and the traditional mosques on the other. There is perhaps no other view that so clearly depicts the juxtaposition of ancient Dubai with the glittery new city.



THE GOLD

Hop for gold in the souk. Souk means "marketplace" and though the stalls aren't ancient, the gold trade is. The government in Dubai closely controls the quality of the product, and the spot prices are displayed outside of every shop so you can be sure that what you are buying is authentic. Haggling is expected and, as with most things here, cash is king. Whether or not you get a good deal is entirely dependent on your negotiating skills.



THE DESERT

The most luxurious way to see the desert is by visiting the sublime **BAB AL SHAMS RESORT**, about a forty-five-minute drive from town. Take a ride on a camel or an Arabian horse, or enjoy the ancient art of falconry. For those with a bigger sense of adventure, and the pocketbook of royalty, head out with **PLATINUM HERITAGE** for an excursion into the desert that you'll never forget. Depart in a Mercedes G wagon (the off-road vehicle of choice for the rich, famous and royal) for nighttime camel rides and dinner under the stars inside a royal desert retreat. Dinner is served on a table made out of an antique Arabic wooden door and sits beside private *majlis*, or sitting rooms, complete with silk carpets and soft, fluffy cushions for relaxing by a bonfire.



THE PALM

The iconic palm shaped island known simply as "**THE PALM**" is billed by the city as the eighth wonder of the world. This geographical marvel is a completely man-made island that can be seen from outer space. In addition to hotels and condominiums, there are water parks for the entire family to cool off.



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