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

#### WHY GO

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



#### **BURJALARAB**

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 recreation 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.

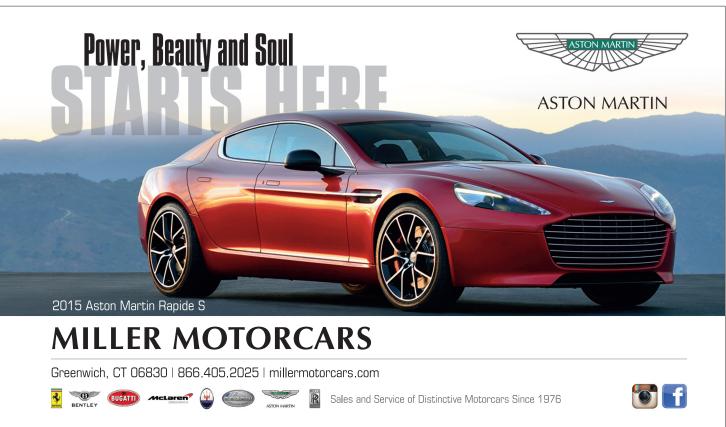


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## GO

# 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** as 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 offroad 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.

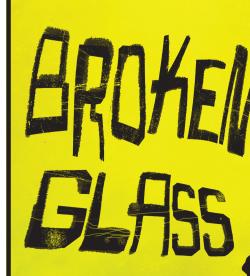
#### THE PALM

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





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