



# Dubai



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Shimmering skyscrapers, shiny new shopping malls and sleek supercars, Dubai is an ultra-modern and seemingly ever-expanding holiday destination. But dig a little deeper and you will discover intriguing glimpses of the original town hidden amongst the bright lights and framed by bold, modern architecture.

The most convenient way to see what is left of old Dubai is to book a city tour – an air-conditioned coach will pick you up from your hotel and take you to visit the **Al-Fahidi Fort** (home to the Dubai Museum), the Creek, the Souks and a *majlis* (a traditional Arabic “place of sitting”). Whilst it is possible to visit all these places independently, a knowledgeable tour guide can enrich your visit immensely. If you visit **Dubai Creek**, catch an *abra* (a motorised, wooden water-taxi) for areal taste of Dubai – at only one Dirham this method of transport is used by local and tourists alike and is one of the best value experiences Dubai has to offer – as

well as being a much more authentic way to see the Creek than on a river cruise!

But if you want to get a flavour of what Dubai was like before its emergence as a major tourist destination, why not head out to some of the other Emirates, such as Sharjah or Fujairah, where you can see the UAE’s oldest mosque, and get a feel for how life was in Dubai only 50 years ago?

One of Dubai’s biggest draws, of course, is the shopping – from the dazzling Dubai Mall to the designer boutiques of City Walk through to the traditional souks. If you love to shop, you could easily spend an entire week here indulging your passion! The **Deira Old Souk** (or Spice Souk) is a wonderfully fragrant place to browse around and enjoy the exotic smells emanating from the mountains of chilli, frankincense and ginger, amongst many other spices. The **Gold Souk** is one of the largest in Arabia and every window is filled with more lavish, glittering gold jewellery than you could ever wish for.

And if that is not enough, there are always the Perfume and Electronics Souks to tempt you to part with your Dirhams.

One of Dubai’s newest attractions, and a must see if you are in Dubai, is the **Green Planet**, a bio-dome through which visitors can walk and experience an expedition to the tropics. This enclosed, man-made ecosystem contains over 3,000 plants and animals found in the tropics and is both educational and fun. This is an incredible attraction, even by Dubai’s exacting standards.

If you are travelling with kids, Dubai has several theme parks, including **Legoland**. The newly built **Bolly-**

**wood** (inspired by Mumbai’s film industry) and **Motiongate** (Hollywood-themed) parks have attractions for all ages and they are worth a visit both for the rides themselves and for the fantastic theming. Conveniently, the parks are all connected by **Riverland**, a retail and restaurant zone, turning it into one mega-theme park complex! And if theme parks are your thing, a little further away is the spectacular **Ferrari World** on Yas Island, Abu Dhabi where you can ride the rollercoaster with the highest loop on the planet!

Another family-friendly attraction is the **Wild Wadi Water Park**, which is great fun for kids of all ages. It may be the oldest water park in Dubai, but it is still one of the best! It offers 30 rides – some of them fairly extreme – as well as somewhere to cool off from the often oppressive heat of Dubai.

One of the highlights of any trip to Dubai and an experience not to be missed is the **Arabian Adventures Sundowner Dune Dinner Safari**. It starts with an exhilarating drive in a 4x4 vehicle up and down the undulating sand dunes, which stretch far into the distance (if you suffer from motion sickness, this is probably not the trip for you!). You are then driven to a Bedouin-style camp where you can take a short camel ride as the blazing sun sets over the desert. This is followed by a delicious and plentiful Arabic buffet and drinks, and the opportunity to get an intricate henna tattoo. Afterwards, sit back, relax and enjoy the traditional entertainment whilst watching millions of stars twinkling overhead. This is one of those evenings you will never want to end.

Places to stay in Dubai are plentiful: the majority are high-end (and high-price) and provide a luxurious holiday experience. The striking, wave-shaped **Jumeirah Beach Hotel**



is a fabulous hotel situated by the beach, with a wide selection of top-class restaurants, a cocktail bar with a fantastic view on the 24<sup>th</sup> floor, beautiful swimming pools, and a great kids club. And if that wasn’t enough, guests receive free entry to Wild Wadi and all the rooms have spectacular views over the Creek and of the iconic **Burj Al Arab**.

When it is time to refuel, the place to go is **Pier 7** at Dubai Marina, where all the stylish restaurants enjoy great views over the Marina. **Asia**

**Asia** (Asian and Middle Eastern dishes) and the **Scene** by Simon Rimmer (British pub favourites) are very popular eateries, so make a reservation in advance, especially at the weekend. The stylish bar on the top level of **Pier 7** is the place to head after your meal to sip a cocktail or two overlooking the Marina and to take in the bright lights of downtown Dubai.

So, if you are looking for a luxury holiday destination with plenty to keep you entertained, Dubai should be high on your list of places to visit.



▼ Burj Al Arab, Dubai



What's Hot World?

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▲ Bollywood palace, Dubai