
Dubai Guide



There's plenty to
chew over in Dubai

Dubai does things big. From the world's tallest building to the world's biggest mall, the jewel of the United Arab Emirates is a testament to determination and ambition. The world's best singers, comedians and DJs have been in town, yet there's still plenty of traditional Dubai to explore, from textile souqs to camel rides. There's also something old world and romantic about the many hotel bars, where alcohol is more commonly permitted and consumed. It's where international travellers mingle and toast this unique oasis.

Airport info

Virgin Atlantic flies to Dubai International Airport, Terminal 1.

Transport

A regular Metro system takes passengers to the City Centre every 10-15 minutes, and costs less than a pound. The airport is a 10 minute drive from the city centre, with metred taxis costing around £3.50 and hotel shuttle buses offering easy, reliable transport.

The must sees

First stop is 828 metres straight up, to the observation deck of Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the world. A 65 metre

travelator at the bottom includes a history of its construction, before an elevator takes you the top fast at 10 m/s. The second. Back on sandy ground there are plenty of safari tours, ranging from half days to overnight camping, and include dune bashing in a four wheel drive, a falcon show and a belly dance. If this has given you a taste of something more traditional, then visit the Bastakia Quarter. Built in the 19th century by Persian traders, the enticing, winding streets feature various souqs (open air marketplaces).

If you fancy seeing more of the UAE on your travels, Ras Al-Khaimah, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi are all within an hour's drive.



Local delicacies

With 160 food outlets at The Dubai Mall alone, it's hardly surprising that Dubai has every type of cuisine imaginable (except pork, the sale of which is regulated and more difficult to find). Arabic food is king, biryanis are big and you've never had a shawarma until you've tried it in the UAE. These juicy wraps of chicken or lamb, served with tabbouleh, hummas and pickled turnips are even tastier when tried at the beginning of the night, rather than at the more traditionally British end of a big night out. Try Automatic or Wild Peeta for the gourmet variety. For world class dining, Ottomans has award winning Middle Eastern and North African cuisine, or Reflets par Pierre Gagnaire within the Dubai Intercontinental Hotel for the best French food this side of the Persian Gulf. C'est magnifique.



Why I love

"The Dubai Mall is the biggest in the world: there are 1,200 shops. It's impossible to do it in one day, it's a shopper's dream. There are 50 shoe shops. I know because I've counted them! There's also an ice rink, an aquarium and a fountain out front designed by the guys that did the Bellagio in Vegas. I also love the Mall of the Emirates. It's not quite as big, but has a ski slope inside with three football fields full of snow. And penguins!" Cassie, Customer Service.



All play and no work

Friday brunch has become a fabulous institution in Dubai, with mid morning meals generally lasting four hours or longer. Two restaurants in the Atlantis Hotel hold legendary weekly gatherings, the Saffron Brunch and the Seafire Brunch. Both cost around £77, but includes a constant stream of champagne, and at Saffron, 220 dishes to choose from at any given time. Do remember however that public drunkenness isn't tolerated.



A great place to watch the world go by

City skyline views, a boating lake and even a cricket pitch make Za'abeel Park a terrific place to unwind and take a few snaps, with plenty of illuminated fountains to add to the charm. Jumeirah Beach Park is more popular due to its proximity to the water. With temperatures ranging between 31 and 49 degrees celsius throughout the year, a beach/park hybrid is the perfect combination.



Timezone

Standard time zone:

UTC/GMT+4 hours

All time zones are based on GMT +0 (UK time).

Currency

Dirham (AED)

Dialling Code

+ 971

Electricity

The electricity supply is 220/240 volts. The socket type is the same as the three point British system. Most hotels and homes have adaptors for electrical appliances.

Public Holidays

1 January: New Years Day

24 January: Prophet Mohammed's Birthday

4 June: Lailat al Mira

7 August: End of Ramadan

14 October: Feast of Sacrifice

4 November: Al-Hijra (Islamic New Year)

2 December: UAE National Day

Climate Information

Average Maximum Temperature:

January: 24C (75F)

April: 33C (91F)
July: 41C (106F)
October: 36C (96F)

Average Minimum Temperature:

January: 13C (55F)
April: 19C (66F)
July: 28C (83F)
October: 22C (71F)

Average Rainfall (inches):

January: 0.38inches (0.97cm)
April: 0.19inches (0.49cm)
July: 0.13inches (0.33cm)
October: 0.05inches (0.11cm)
