

DUBAI

A Great Cure for the Winter Blues

As Elizabeth Delport says the one place that is antidote to the Australian winter is the Middle East. Take off in zero temperatures, 14 hours in a comfy flight and arrival to 25-degree heat and blue skies. Bliss. It's not just the sun; it's the feeling of vertigo as you experience a total culture change. Dubai in the UAE is the most extreme. It's like Sin City-Vegas-meets-LA with a dash of Disney. It genuinely feels like the belly button of the world—a hub for East and West—where all is possible. You step out of the plane and the vibrancy hits you like a lightning bolt. Skyscrapers are lit up in every color, the Burj el Khalifa, the highest building in the world, sparkling like the Middle Eastern cousin of the Eiffel Tower and a medley of smells: Lebanese mezze, Dunkin Donuts and Costa Coffee.

What to do in Dubai? Top Personal Recommendations

(By Julie King, Director, Dubai's Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing (Australia & New Zealand Representative Office))

1. A Hamam experience at Jumeirah Zabeel Saray
2. Dinner at one of Souk Al Bahar's many restaurants (in particular Rivington Grill and Mango Tree) to watch the fountain display from the Terrace
3. An abra ride across Dubai Creek followed by a walk through the spice and material souks
4. A reflexology session at Feet First in one of Dubai's malls
5. Lunch at Lime Tree Caf  in Ibn Battatu Mall
6. A day on the beach followed by a massage at the One & Only on The Palm
7. A walk through Bastakiya and a visit to the Art Galleries
8. An afternoon at the Gold and Diamond Park
9. Evening cocktails at 'Atmosphere' showcasing amazing views of Dubai

An essential part of Dubai's cultural fabric also revolves around music and dancing. The tamboura, a string guitar-like instrument that is covered with camel skin, and the tabla, a drum, are the traditional instruments that often accompany the dances.



Top 10 shopping experiences

The Dubai shopping scene offers something for everyone. Dubai Outlet Mall is the first 'outlet' concept mall in the Middle East, taking retailing to new heights offering shoppers big savings on premium and top fashion brands all year round. This includes Alexander McQueen, Armani, Boss, Bulgari, Cartier, Chanel, D&G, Dunhill, Salvatore Ferragamo, Paul Smith and Gucci where prices are 40-75% off the tags. Traditional markets, known as souks, are alive with the buzz of trade and the spirit of their past.

1. Gold and spice souks – Get a taste of traditional Arabian commerce at these atmospheric souks.
2. Dubai Mall – The world's biggest shopping mall, at the base of the world's tallest building, with the world's largest suspended aquarium.
3. Mall of the Emirates – Home of Ski Dubai and a range of leading international and local shops.
4. Ibn Battuta – follow the route of the famous Arabian traveller, Ibn Battuta, through the themed sections of Persia, India, China, Egypt, Tunisia and Andalusia.
5. BurJuman – a haven for luxury and high end fashion at this inner-city mall.
6. Wafi City – shopping, entertainment, art and some great cafes and restaurants.
7. Karama – Go in search of a bargain at this outdoor souvenir-hunters paradise!
8. Dubai Summer Surprises – The best deals for visitors and locals alike at this summer-season counterpart to the famous Dubai Shopping Festival.
9. Satwa – a traditional Arabic highstreet with the buzz of the city.
10. Dubai Shopping Festival – an annual month-long and city-wide shopping extravaganza with discounts on everything from cars, electronics, fashion and jewellery. There is also a Global Village – a unique around the world shopping experience.

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- An Emirati meal at The Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding in Bastakiya
- A curry at the popular Pakistani restaurant Ravis in Satwa
- A shwarma in one of the many Arabic restaurants in town. Some of the best include:
- Eat and Drink (numerous)
- Al-Mallah (Al-Diyafah St, Satwa)
- Beirut(Al-Diyafah St, Satwa)
- Saj Express (Sheikh Zayed Road)

Foodie must try!

Unique dining out experiences

1. Pierchic – Souk Madinat Jumeirah
2. Nobu – Atlantis the Palm
3. Al Hadheerah Desert Restaurant – Bab Al Shams Desert Resort & Spa
4. Atmosphere – Burj Khalifa
5. Bateaux Dubai – dinner cruise
6. STAY by Yannick Alleno – One & Only The Palm
7. Bussola Restaurant – The Westin Dubai Mina Seyahi
8. VU's – Jumeirah Emirates Towers
9. Armani Ristorante – Armani Hotel
10. La Petite Maison – Dubai International Financial Centre

Nightlife is also out of this world. Dubai's Time Out is bigger than London's. All the top chefs and restaurants have set up shop here like Zuma and the Ivy, as have celebrity chefs Gordon Ramsay and Jamie Oliver. The party scene is also hot to trot. Every time we have come a big DJ is doing a set—this time Roger Sanchez, Axwell New Year 2011 and in a week David Guetta. The clubs are decadent and sumptuous, such as the Cavalli Club with its glittering chandeliers or new hype-y Mo*vida from London.

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