

DUBAI IN 36 HOURS

The "Do Not" Miss List

By Deb Obendorf

Surrounded by the vast Arabian Desert and an aquamarine Persian Gulf, Dubai virtually shimmers in gold.

An independent city-state in the United Arab Emirates, Dubai is known for luxury shopping, ultramodern architecture, some of the world's tallest buildings, and a lively nightlife scene. Like its sister cities of Hong Kong and Singapore, there is no lack of opulence or entertainment.

TOP TEN THINGS YOU MUST DO

1. **Abra (water taxi) on Dubai Creek** - Dubai Creek is a [saltwater creek](#) that previously extended to nearby [Ras Al Khor](#) Wildlife Sanctuary, but as part of the new Dubai canal, it extends through to the [Persian Gulf](#). (Depending on where your hotel is you may choose to drive, but Abras are the cheapest, fastest way to travel.) Forget expensive cruises, this is the way to see the Dubai Creek - and you can gape at some of the most amazing yachts you will ever see. It's from the Dubai Creek that you can access some of Dubai's famous shopping at the Gold Souk.
2. **Gold Souk** - A long street full of modern shops selling overly ornate designs - in retina ripping 24 carats. *See more in **Shopping**.*
3. **Spice Souk** - Amble between the fragrant and overflowing stalls which retain some of the flavor of the old Dubai. *See more in **Shopping**.*
4. **Burj Al Arab Hotel** - The unique billowing sail design of this world-renowned luxury hotel makes it a must-see for all visitors. Getting a reservation for a drink at the bar only or for high tea, dinner possibly depending on how much you wish to invest, note: you will not be allowed in the hotel without getting a reservation thru your concierge.
5. **Burj Khalifa** - The tallest building in Dubai, resplendent with a light and water show.
6. **Desert tour** - Great adventure for the early evening. Ride in 4-wheel drives to the site of great authentic BBQ, camel rides (optional!), belly dancing and experience of the vastness of the desert (beautiful). Arabian Adventures have been around for a long time and are very reliable, try their website as well. (see details below) a bit contrived, but well organized safaris are king of the sandcastle, complete with dune wadi bashing, camel rides, belly dancing, shish-a smoking Bedouin tents.
7. **City Tour** - Perhaps a private driver and guide in the morning for city tour and desert tour early evening would be a good combination.
8. **Dubai Museum** - Know little about Dubai's history? Start here in Dubai's oldest building. Its quaint, informative and you can be in and out in a jiffy. *Al Fahidi Fort Bastakiya Bur Dubai 353-1862*
9. **Jumeirah Mosque** - A stunning specimen of Islamic Architecture. No bare arms or legs, shorts, etc.
10. **Camel Racing** - Early birds should cab it to this 15 km track for the 7:00 am, Friday race starts, where robot jockeys lead the charge. Camel bags, blankets and tourist **tat** are sold at the local market behind the grandstand. Dubai Camel Racing Club - Al Ain Road, Al Marmoom - Dubai - United Arab Emirates +971 4 832 6526

SHOPPING

The Souks: Spice, Gold and Otherwise

Where and When: Situated in Deira, the souks tend to be open from 9:00 am until 1:00 pm, and then again from 4:00 to 9:00 pm. The best time to visit these is in the early evening -- but if taking a taxi, beware of the shocking Dubai-Deira traffic, and plan your route accordingly to eliminate backtracking.

Directions: Have your cab drop you at the Deira Old Souk Abra Station, simply cross the road, and you will be facing a row of ochre colored shops, split by Old Baladiya Rd. (NOTE: Keep your driver's number and ask him to wait for you at the end of Souk Al Kabeer which will be the end of the Gold Souk where you will pop out at the end of this foray.)

Walk ten paces up Old Baladiya Road, and turn immediate left into the tiny alley where you'll find the best of the **Spice Souk**. Here you can amble between the fragrant and overflowing stalls which retain some of the flavor of the old Dubai.

When you're done, head back to where you started, only this time keep walking all the way up old Baladiya Road. At the end of the street of modern shops on the right starts the **Gold Souk** on Sikkat Al Kahil St. Now covered with an all-weather mall roof, it is a long street full of modern shops selling overly ornate designs - in retina ripping 24 carats. Bargaining is essential, and you should aim for around 50% of the opening gambit.

Walk along Sikkat Al Kahil Street and turn right into Souk Deira St. At the top of this street on the right, you will find the **Perfume Souk** and several good perfume stores. Word of caution - be careful not to drip the heavy oil on you - it stains!

Once at the end of this street, turn right into al Souk Al Kabeer Street - which brings you back to where you started - at the **Old Souk Abra**. Your driver should be waiting nearby, and you can call him when you arrive at this point.

Noteworthy Shops

- **Pride of Kashmir:** Just 5 min around the corner from the marina is this warehouse stocked with a good selection of fine carpets and pashminas
Souk Al Bahar | Phone: +971 4 420 3606
- **Aladdin Shoes:** Custom made sequined slippers from the best in the biz. Mohammed can make them in only two days. Old souk | Phone: 050-515-4351

HOTELS

There is probably not a bad hotel in Dubai. Here are 3 of the greats. The HILTON in Abra Creek is an alternative, inexpensive with a shuttle to the Jumeriah Hilton for beach time, close to all the sites and the airport.

- **The Palace, the Old Town:** This hotel has been around for quite some time, and still feels like old Dubai. The location is good for sightseeing and avoiding the atrocious traffic (so ubiquitous in Dubai)

- **Burj Al Arab:** If you have the \$\$\$ to spend, go for it! Where else will you stay that has solid gold faucets in the bathrooms. It is expensive though, and a standard-ish room for \$1136 per night is...dear, and the "seven star" rooms can be a bit garish.
- **Madinat Jumeriah Hotel:** Nestled on the shores of the Arabian Gulf, Mina A' Salam is the 'harbor of peace' - and gateway to Madinat Jumeirah, The Arabian Resort of Dubai. Offering a unique escape into a world rich in culture and faithful to time honored values, this is a grand boutique hotel of exquisite style.

RESTAURANTS

- **The Rooftop Lounge:** Looking out over the Palm Jumeirah, The Roof Top has an atmosphere that is second to none.
Khalid Bin Al Waleed Road | +971 52 676 3974
- **QD's:** Views across the creek are lovely. Fun, relaxed atmosphere in the evening with lots of music. The portions are large and the meat we had tasted very fresh. Good selection of alcoholic drinks as well as soft drinks and shish-a.
Dubai Creek Golf & Yacht Club Sheik Rashid Rd | +971 4 295 6000
- **Al Hadheerah:** Forty minutes outside of Dubai is this extraordinary, themed, open air desert diner set in a huge uncovered market, complete with belly dancers. Pre-book one of the booths or a tent, or better yet why not stay overnight at the luxurious Bab Al Shams?
Bab Al Shams Desert Resort | +971 4 832-6699

CLUBS AND BARS

- **Bar 44:** Old hang out for the residents of Dubai and a fun spot to connect with friends.
Grosvenor House/ West Marine | +971 4 317-6000
- **Gold On 27 | Burj Al Arab:** Jumeirah - Step into an ambience crafted with the fine touches of gold and enjoy Dubai's magnificent skyline from this remarkable nightspot.
Burj Al Arab Jumeirah, 27th floor | Reservations recommended, for the most expensive (worth it!) drink/view you will have

Three Arabic phrases you will need

Marhaba: *Well, hello*

Shukran: *Thanks, so much*

Shway, Shway: *Driver, kindly slow down*