

Metropol **travel destinations**



Robyn Galloway, managing director of The Innovative Travel Company, first visited Dubai in 1990 and has watched its phenomenal growth over the past 20 years as well as the increasing popularity of this enigmatic destination...



As a niche wholesaler Innovative's award-winning Ancient Kingdoms Holidays programme features a selection of popular options for Dubai.

Travel fact file

Best time to visit - October to May to avoid soaring temperatures and sandstorms

Currency - The Dirham (1Dhs = 0.35 NZ cents). Major credit cards accepted, ATMs in most malls

Tipping - Not expected but 10% is appreciated for good service

Language - Arabic is the official language but English is widely spoken

Religion - Islam is the official religion, but other religions are practiced and respected

Ramadan - The traditional month of fasting in 2011 is 1-29 August.

Dress - Western dress is acceptable but should be conservative in public or at places of worship

As one of the seven United Arab Emirates, Dubai's dazzling architectural and business development and exotic Arabian flavour has wide appeal for travellers en route to the Middle East, Mediterranean, North Africa and Europe. A myriad of events, activities and attractions lures visitors of all ages to discover the delights of Dubai.

A premium family destination

Great weather and beautiful beaches are sometimes eclipsed by the formidable facilities of Wild Wadi Water Park, Aquaventure, Underwater Zoo and Kidzania, not to mention the surreal experience of indoor ice skating and skiing in the middle of a desert! The heady combination of culture, action and adventure is fast establishing Dubai as an outstanding family destination.



A place to be pampered

Spectacular hotels have ensured Dubai's reputation as a 5-star destination. It is also becoming renowned as a top spa destination for both women and men who now constitute 25% of spa visitors. Drawing on influences from east and west, visitors will find spas with unique themes, concepts and treatments from traditional Arabian ingredients to contemporary international methods.



A shopper's paradise

Dubai attracts shoppers from all over the world. With over 50 modern shopping malls selling tax free items and the bustling traditional souks for gold, silk, spices and produce, the city caters to the dogged and the discerning and continues its 3000 years of trading history!



World-class events

A glittering calendar of prestigious events brings numerous competitors and spectators to Dubai each year. As well as the Dubai Cup (the world's richest horse race), the city hosts the Dubai World Golf Championship, World Sevens Rugby, International Tennis, International Powerboat racing, the Dubai Aerospace Exhibition and Desert Car Rallies.

A Fusion of cuisines

Dubai offers an enviable selection of restaurants and cuisines from all over the world and to cater for international visitors, many restaurants are licensed to serve alcohol. Middle Eastern cuisine is a blend of tastes from Morocco, Tunisia, Iran, Egypt and Lebanon, including beef, lamb, chicken, seafood, rice, nuts, dates, yoghurt, rice and quite subtle spices. Meals usually comprise a "Mezze" or starter platter of olives, humus and, salad, a meat course and desserts which are often very sweet.



Rich traditions

The painting of henna designs on the hands and feet is a traditional style of adornment, especially for special events or occasions. As a unique souvenir, visitors can have a design painted on arms, ankles or shoulders, while appreciating the intricacy, skill and speed of the henna artists at work.

In Dubai you will often see Shisha or water pipes being smoked in local cafés as people socialise with family and friends. Shisha pipes are popular with men and women and the tobacco is sometimes flavoured with strawberry or apple.

What's new for 2011

Scheduled to open in 2011 is "Atmosphere" the world's highest restaurant. Located on the 122nd floor of Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building, the restaurant will be open for lunch and dinner. Dine in the sky if you dare!

Must see or do:

- 4WD desert excursion
- Sand surfing and camel rides
- A dhow dinner cruise
- Cross Dubai Creek by abra (water taxi)
- Visit the superb Dubai Museum
- Marvel at the heritage buildings of old Dubai
- Watch the world's tallest fountain show at Dubai Mall
- Browse or buy at the souks of Deira
- Take a day trip to Sharjah or Al Ain
- Try fresh dates
- View Burj Khalifa - the world's tallest building
- Take a Bedouin Safari



Increasingly Innovative!

Innovative Travel is currently celebrating 20 years since its establishment! As a respected brand at home and abroad, the company continues to innovate and invigorate the travel industry with exciting destinations and intriguing ways of experiencing them.

Their consultants are widely travelled themselves and therefore, "We sell what we've seen," says managing director Robyn Galloway. As a niche wholesaler Innovative's award-winning Ancient Kingdoms Holidays programme features a selection of popular options for Dubai and provides "tailor-made" travel to fit the exact requirements of clients whether independent travellers, groups of family and friends, or conference and incentive travel groups.

The company offers a varied selection of hotels and apartments across several categories with special consideration for the preferences of New Zealand travellers. Properties are personally visited annually by the staff of Innovative Travel to ensure up to date information and local knowledge is consistently maintained.



If diverse styles of travel to interesting countries offering something a little different appeals to you, then contact award winning Innovative Travel for information, brochures or bookings by phoning 03 365 2910 or visiting www.innovative-travel.com or contact your local travel agent.