

definitely
Dubai

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DUBAI - A POPULAR STOPOVER DESTINATION

Dubai's popularity continues to grow as a stopover destination enroute to Europe and as an ideal gateway to the wider Middle East, North African and Mediterranean destinations, says Carol Wisker, The Innovative Travel Co's national sales & marketing manager.

Dubai, one of the seven United Arab Emirates, has for many years set an exciting pace of development, with all manner of events, activities and properties to attract travellers, businesses and projects. These aspects, in combination with an exotic Arabian flavour, contribute to Dubai's wide appeal.

TOP TEN MUST DO's

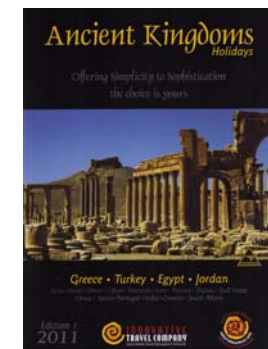
1. **4WD safari** over the desert sand-dunes to a Bedouin camp where a sumptuous banquet and an evening full of entertainment and traditional activities is provided
2. Dinner **Dhow cruise** on the Dubai Creek including a banquet of local cuisine with the twinkling lights of Dubai in view.
3. Do what the locals do and take an **Abra (water taxi) ride** across the Dubai Creek and head for the souq (traditional market place), the spice market, the Gold souq and more.
4. Visit the **museum** where the history of the pearl divers, the Bedouin tribes and traditional villages and lives of the past are beautifully showcased. Take a stroll in this historic area of wind towers and restored buildings which are now utilised as galleries, cafes and visitor centres.
5. **Shopping:** Dubai is famous as a shopping mecca and has it all: from traditional goods to designer clothing, jewellery and homewares. Dates for the much celebrated **Dubai Shopping Festival** have been announced and it will take place from 20 Jan to 20 Feb 2011. The number of shopping malls available can keep you busy for days! The Mall of the Emirates is a must see, as is Dubai Mall and Deira City Shopping Centre
6. Take an excursion to desert oasis town of **Al Ain** or nearby Sharjah
7. Visit the amazing **Ski Dubai** slopes in the Mall of the Emirates for a unique opportunity to try out your skiing and boarding skills
8. Fun for all the family can be had at the **Wild Wadi** water park and Aquaventure at Atlantis - The Palm
9. Explore Dubai at your own pace on the **Hop-on Hop-off buses**.
10. Visit the **fountain show at Dubai Mall** – the tallest fountain show in the world and ascend to "The Top" at Burj Khalifa.



Robyn Galloway, founder and managing director of The Innovative Travel Co., first visited Dubai in 1990 and has witnessed the amazing growth and development which has taken place over the past 20 years.

The Middle East specialist and New Zealand niche wholesaler provides a comprehensive range of bespoke travel arrangements for leisure, conference and incentive travellers to Dubai.

Innovative's award-winning **Ancient Kingdoms Holidays** programme features a selection of popular options for Dubai and provides for tailor-made travel to fit clients exact requirements - from independent travellers, groups of family and friends to conference and incentive group travel.



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AGENT INCENTIVE 'CHRISTMAS BONUS'

All agents booking clients to Dubai with Ancient Kingdoms Holidays during in the month of December will go in the draw to win one of five \$100 Westfield Vouchers.

OTHER SIGHTS, ACTIVITIES & POINTS OF INTEREST

Beaches: Dubai has spectacular white sand beaches.

Dhow Building Yard: these old age

traditional vessels are made totally of wood, including the nails, and take months to build and can last over 100 years once finished.

Jumeirah Mosque: the most striking mosque in Dubai.

Bird Watching: Dubai is a growing destination for bird watchers. Many of the species are not commonly found elsewhere in the Middle East. Some 80 species breed locally while over 400 species have been recorded on their migration between Africa and Central Asia.

Hot Air

Ballooning: daily flights for up to 12 people sail over the city and mountains or desert (weather permitting).

Parasailing: available at most of the beach hotels.

ALWAYS SOMETHING NEW IN DUBAI

1. Scheduled to open in JAN 2011, the world's highest restaurant 'Atmosphere', located on the 122nd floor of the Burj Khalifa, will serve lunch, afternoon pre-dinner drinks and dinner.
2. Dubai's first purpose-built all-inclusive resort, Palazzo Versace, is under construction on the banks of Dubai Creek, and will offer 213 rooms and suites, 169 luxury villas.
3. Jamie Oliver is setting up shop in Dubai: 'Jamie's Italian' restaurant is opening at the Festival Centre Canal Walk in Dubai Festival City. He follows Gordon Ramsay and other celebrity chefs in opening restaurants in Dubai.

LOCAL TRADITIONS/HABITS/CUSTOMS

Sheesha Pipes (water pipe) are often smoked in local cafes while socialising with friends and family. Pipes, usually flavoured with strawberry or apple tobacco, are popular with men and women.

Henna painting is a traditional practice of painting on the hands and feet for adornment especially on festive occasions such as weddings. Visitors can have a design painted onto ankles, arms or shoulders as a unique souvenir for a cost of around Dhs.20 and the pattern can fade either in one week or approx three weeks.

"The Henna artists are amazing to observe, says Carol Wisker. Their talents are really appreciated when you see the intricate designs and the speed at which they work. The end result is fabulous and it's great entertainment at the same time".

Hospitality is extremely important in this region of the world and Dubai is no exception. Visitors are warmly welcomed and Dubai is a country tolerant of other religions and cultures.

Dress: It is important to dress modestly. Skirts and shorts down past the knee and short sleeved shirts, T-shirts etc (rather than sleeveless or

strapless) are recommended to show respect.

Language is Arabic, however English is widely spoken.

Religion: Islam is the official religion, however all other religions are respected and followers are free to practice other religions.

Ramadan: In 2011 the dates for Ramadan are 1-29 August. During this period Muslims are required to fast during daylight hours. This can be a good time to find bargains and great rates since hotels tend to be less crowded. While working hours are slightly altered and many restaurants are closed much of the day, there is an air of festivity after dark. Shops and malls stay open longer, and hotels and restaurants offer special Iftar buffets to break the fast.



DINING OUT IN DUBAI

Dubai offers an enviable choice of restaurants and cuisines from all over the world and for all budgets. Many of the restaurants are licensed and serve alcohol, but it pays to check this when booking. Traditional cuisine includes a blend of Middle East influences from Morocco, Tunisia, Iran & Egypt, but modern Arabic cuisine is mainly influenced by Lebanese style including beef, lamb, chicken, seafood, rice, nuts (mostly pistachios), dates, yoghurt and spices. Meals usually consist of a selection of starters 'Mezze' such as olives, humus, salad and pita bread then a meat course and traditional honey-sweet desserts.

Dubai has many internationally-branded restaurants and celebrity restaurants are on the rise.

An Arabian evening at Al Hadheera Desert Restaurant is also a 'must'.



SOME HOTEL RECOMMENDATIONS

Innovative Travel provides a large selection of hotels and apartments of every category, geared to the needs of NZ travellers, including a number offering guaranteed 24-hour check-in. Properties are visited annually by the Innovative team to ensure brochured information is accurate.

Among the recommended properties are **The Address**, perfect for discerning clients, the **Le Royal Meridien** for an amazing beach experience and the **Hilton Jumeirah**, (pictured) which is a great choice for families. **Flora Creek Apartments**, too, is ideal for families, as it offers round-the-clock check-in.



TAKE A SIDE TRIP

One option is to take a drive to the Musandam Peninsula in Oman. The 'Mystical Musandam by the Sea' is a full day excursion from Dubai, including a spectacular Dhow cruise of the scenic fjords of Musandam priced at \$290pp.

These and other early booking offers are available, all book and pay by 15 Dec 10.

A second early booking deadline is scheduled for 28 February with the 4-day 'Best of Dubai' priced from \$439pp twin share at tourist class Riviera Hotel (travel between 1 May – 31 Aug)

FREEPHONE 0508 100111 or email info@innovative-travel.com

Innovative's popular 4-day **Best of Dubai** is currently on sale priced from \$489pp First Class, which includes 3 nights accommodation with daily breakfast, return airport transfers and 4WD Desert Safari (travel from 6 Jun-28 Aug).

Also featured in Ancient Kingdoms Holidays is an overnight **Bedouin Safari**, staying in tented accommodation in a spectacular desert setting with traditional banquet and entertainment priced at \$180pp.

GETTING AROUND DUBAI

It is becoming even easier to get around Dubai since the opening of the Dubai Metro Red Line. The Green Line of the world's longest fully automated rail transport system is the next stage which is due to open in August 2011. There will be 70km of lines in total

and 47 stations to transport you around the emirate. "The Metro is very clean and incredibly efficient," says Robyn Galloway. "In the past some clients have rightly complained about the traffic jams but the Metro is now freeing up the traffic and offering travellers an easy way of getting around."

Other forms of transport include local buses, which even provide air-conditioned bus shelters, car hire and the ever-popular taxi.



SHOWCASE EVENTS STAGED IN DUBAI

Many prestigious events take place in Dubai, including the richest horse race in the world, the **Dubai World Cup**.

For keen golfers the PGA quality golf course is the venue for **The Dubai World Championship** with millions in prize money attracting the world's best players.

Other events include Dubai Desert Classic, Dubai Rugby Sevens, the Dubai Aerospace Exhibition (every 2 years), Dubai Tennis Championships held annually, and Powerboat racing (annually).



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TIPPING

Tipping is not necessarily expected, but is appreciated for good service. In restaurants a tip of around 10% is usual for good service.

CURRENCY & CREDIT CARDS

The Currency of Dubai is the Dirham (Dhs) and Dhs1 = NZD 0.35. All major credit cards are accepted, however it is always good to have some local cash and US dollars on you. Most banks have ATM machines available and ATMs are located conveniently around most shopping malls.

VISA

All visitors except GCC nationals require a visa. Most nationalities including NZ & Australian nationals are granted a free visa on arrival, valid for 60 days and renewable for a further 30 days only on payment of Dhs.500. Some nationalities have other criteria for visa approval and Innovative Travel is well versed in providing hassle free visa services where required for Dubai and other selected Middle East destinations.

BEST TIME TO VISIT

The best time to visit Dubai is between October and May. July and August are the hottest months with temps into the 40's, but there are countless indoor attractions. Dubai's climate is sunny and hot for most of the year with minimal rainfall only in winter and some strong winds which can stir up the sand.

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