

# Off the beaten track in Dubai

Dubai's appeal lies in its larger-than-life personality, its ability to cater to all types of travellers, and its multicultural makeup. A new generation of Dubai denizens are reimagining this urban landscape, and so, Dubai's must-sees and must-does are also taking new courses.

For explorers who enjoy going off-script and delving beneath the surface, we've put together a list of the essential dos and don'ts that will allow visitors to see the city in a new light.

## Do eat local and like a local

For epicures used to discovering new destinations through its cuisine, Dubai is a gastronomic playground, with restaurants by Michelin-starred chefs from around the world. The usual suspects – [Bread Street Kitchen](#) by Gordon Ramsay, [Junoon](#) by Vikas Khanna, [Stay by Yannick Alléno](#) and [Nobu](#) by Nobu Matsuhisa – feature high on most must-visit lists but Dubai also has a vibrant line-up of Emirati options.



[Image Source: Al Fanar](#)

A new generation of city-based culinary maestros are cooking up a storm, blending Emirati culinary heritage with global inspiration. For visitors, this has opened up a world of new flavours and dishes such as Harees, Thareed, Ouzi and the ubiquitous Karak Chai all prepared in Emirati kitchens such as [Al Fanar](#), Klayya Bakery And Sweets, Bait 1971 and [Milas](#). Local favourite [Frying Pan Adventures](#) also offers a Middle East Food Pilgrimage that covers Emirati, Palestinian, Lebanese and Iranian specialties. Priced at AED 415, the tour features a 2.8 km walk spanning 4.25 hours with opportunities to sample regional treats and purchase saffron, baklava, Arabic cookies, Iranian dates, pomegranate molasses and nuts.

For the dedicated gourmand, there are also fun cooking classes – such as the one at [Culinary Boutique](#), where Emirati cuisine is on the menu. The daily class schedule ranges from 1.5 to three hours, with prices starting at AED 475.

## Don't just admire art, create it

A stroll down Alserkal Avenue is a must for any visiting aesthete. From works by contemporary artists to collectors' fairs to art house screenings, this creative hub is brimming with all sorts of artistic creations and inspiration. For those looking for a more immersive creative experience, amid the numerous galleries, there is also the opportunity to grab a paintbrush and canvas for a DIY painting session at [thejamjar](#).

With an unlimited supply of paint, your own canvas and a relaxed environment, the space is conducive to having fun and creating a piece of art that you can take home – making for a great alternative Dubai souvenir. The painting packages are priced between AED 110 and AED 350, last between 2 and 4 hours, and are inclusive of all supplies.

For those with theatrical inclinations, the Courtyard Playhouse is the perfect platform to check out local talent, who stage improv sketches and stand-up acts.

## Use local transport for the best view

Visitors to Dubai will not be short on vantage points to take in the city's epic landscape – from the world's tallest building to the upcoming observation wheel, Ain Dubai. But there is something about discovering the city through its state-of-the-art metro, bus and taxi systems, and watching the different cityscapes whizz by.



Kirajesh via [Wikimedia Commons](#) - abra boats on Dubai Creek

The city has taken its passion for linking people and places to a new level by creating area-specific shuttles – traditional abra boats on Dubai Creek, a tram line in Dubai Marina, a monorail on Palm Jumeirah and an old-fashioned trolley line in Downtown Dubai. These offer visitors a chance to take in the sights and sounds of these popular areas at leisure. With transport options like the Art Bus, which plies during Art Season, Dubai also offers a stress-free mode to take in the best shows and spots along with informed guides.

There will soon be yet another high-speed way to view Dubai's alluring skyline and vistas – the revolutionary Hyperloop One, the super-speed pods that will be able to cover a distance of 99 miles in 12 minutes once developed, is expected to pilot in the city ferrying passengers between Dubai and Abu Dhabi. However, for visitors yearning for something truly traditional and exceptional, a trip to the desert can include a camel ride to take in the glorious view of the golden sands touching the blue sky.

## Do go Fashion Forward

Fashionistas will know that Arabs are injecting their unique sense of style into the mainstream. From “modest fashion” staples to beautifully designed lines of abayas that are versatile and beautiful enough to be incorporated into any wardrobe, Arab designs are adding a unique richness to the fabric of global fashion, and Dubai has emerged as a hub, having cultivated a crop of labels that celebrate the city's part-vibrant, part-demure style sensibility.

For those looking to veer away from the tried-and-tested global brands, local designers such as Ayten Al-Khayat (Raw by Ayten), Yasmin Al Mulla (YNM), Huda Al Nuaimi (Huda Al Nuaimi), Ahmad Al Sayed and Saleh Al Banna (House of Nomad) offer fashionable fare that is Middle Eastern in identity yet global in attitude.

Don't just settle for standard accommodation

From underwater suites to Versailles-inspired penthouses, Dubai is in top form when it comes to extravagant domiciles. Featuring helipads and waterparks, Dubai's hospitality scene packs in a lot of activity and luxury, but for those looking for a more subtle and authentic experience, the XVA Art Hotel, brings to life the art, architecture and traditions of Dubai, all in the city's oldest neighbourhood. Just a stone's throw from the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding, which facilitates cultural conversations and excursions, XVA offers visitors a great base from which to launch their discovery of Dubai. On the other hand, those who like to wake up to a different view every day, RV rentals through Airbnb offer the best deal of all – a vista of your choice and a road trip adventure that could take in not just Dubai, but the whole of the UAE as well.



[Image Source: House of Nomad - Left to right:](#) Saleh Al Banna, Ahmed El Sayed

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