

# The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

## 5 OVER-THE-TOP EXPERIENCES YOU MUST DO IN DUBAI



GIUSEPPE CACACE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES (ABOVE); KAMRAN JEBREILI/AP/FILE (BELOW)

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A picture taken in January shows a view of Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest tower, in Dubai.

**D**ubai is extra. Everything about Dubai is over-the-top, from its hotels to its dining scene to its activities. And that's why we love it. Here are five over-the-top experiences you must do in Dubai . . . because you can only do them there.

**Drive like James Bond** James Bond loves to pose with his Aston Martin. We've seen him drive his epic car in "Goldeneye," "Die Another Day," and "Casino Royale" — and will once more in the soon to be released "No Time to Die." When you stay at the Waldorf Astoria Dubai Palm Jumeirah, you can drive one of the Aston Martins through Dubai and the desert (posing in front of your Aston Martin in a desert with a camel photobombing is just about as over-the-top you can get). The experience is gratis for those staying at this Waldorf or at the Waldorf Astoria Ras Al Khaimah.

**Get an outrageous spa treatment** Dubai doesn't settle for average, especially when it comes to self-care. It feels like each spa tries to outdo the next, offering bigger, grander, more luxurious, extravagant treatments. But our favorite is the Sela Mineral gold and caviar facial at The Spa at Address Dubai Mall in downtown Dubai. Turns out, caviar isn't just a

delicacy to eat: It also firms your face. The gold revitalizes your skin, and an anti-aging pearl collagen is added for a touch of plumpness.

**Pearl diving** Dubai contains natural pearls and has a rich pearl history (pun intended). The tradition dates back more than 7,000 years, to when Ras Al Khaimah was a major trading post for pearls in the 1100s. In fact, many of the families who live in Dubai today are there because they wanted to live close to their pearl diving jobs in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. While the UAE pearl industry plummeted after their pearls were replaced by artificial Japanese pearls in the 1900s, you can still take a pearl diving trip steeped in tradition — and you can keep whatever you find. There are a few pearl diving companies that are popular, including the Dubai Pearl Diving Tour or the Waldorf Astoria Ras Al Khaimah experience at the Al Suwaidi Pearl Farm.

**Hang out with camels** Exploring the desert via camel — a.k.a. a desert safari — is the only way to do it here. It's the oldest form of transport, and is actually much easier than riding a horse, as they go incredibly slowly and all you have to do is sit and enjoy the ride. A desert safari in Dubai traditionally includes the sunset camel-ride, an Emirati dinner

(lots of meats and hummus), belly dancing, henna painting, and a falcon show. It's essentially a Dubai bucket list checked off in a single evening.

**Play in the sand** In California, you go surfing; in Colorado, you go skiing. In Dubai, you go sandboarding. It's essentially snowboarding in the desert on sand through the dunes. The natural curves of the desert slopes make it the perfect place to slide down — sometimes from a height of 1,000 feet. You strap on a sandboard, and off you go. Yes, you will fall — but you'll fall into the sand. Alternatively, try Dune Bashing, which is similar — but instead of sliding down on a sandboard, you travel over the

People enjoy a city skyline view with the world's tallest building.



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## HERE

### WEEKEND SKI AND SNOWBOARD GETAWAYS

For a stress-free vacation, let the Boston Ski & Sports Club plan your next ski or snowboard weekend getaway. Upcoming two- to five-day trips to Sunday River, Sugarloaf, Killington, Lake Placid, Montreal, and Jay Peak (through April 17) include a variety of amenities that vary per trip, such as transportation, accommodations, lift passes, discounted rentals, breakfast, BSSC escort, and more. Traveling solo? Trip leaders can match those interested in skiing together with same-level ability, assuring that no one has to ski alone who doesn't want to ski alone. Beginners may sign up for lessons. You don't have to be a member to participate, though nonmembers pay an additional \$30. Rates \$239-\$529. 617-789-4070, [bssc.com/ski-ride/ski-weekend](http://bssc.com/ski-ride/ski-weekend)

### GO FISH, COME HOME RICH

Feeling lucky? Pack your rod and winter boots and head to New Hampshire for the 41st annual Great Meredith Rotary Ice Fishing Derby (Feb. 8-9). Located on the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee, the town attracts anglers and their families from all over New England to this winter wonderland in the hopes of winning one of over \$50,000 in prize awards. You don't even need to fish to win one of the many cash prizes drawn throughout the weekend. Prizes for the top winning fish are \$15,000, \$5,000, and \$3,000. Registration: \$40 per person. [meredithrotary.org/](http://meredithrotary.org/) Lodging and dining options run the gamut from rustic



to fancy; all near the lakeside action. 877-279-6121, [meredithreachamber.com/](http://meredithreachamber.com/)

## THERE

### TREK TO SHERPA VILLAGES

Experience the awe-inspiring majesty of the Himalayas on the Everest Lodge to Lodge tour, a 14-day expedition offered by Wilderness Travel. Arriving and departing from Kathmandu, the level 5 (strenuous) trip features nine days of trekking moderate-to-steep trails, three to six hours a day, at altitudes between 9,000 and 13,035 feet. (Optional hike to 15,400 feet.) While Wilderness Travel does not accompany trekkers to the top of Mount Everest, it does take guests to cloud-perched Sherpa villages with the summit in view. Along the route, you'll visit the trading town of Namche Bazaar, Pangboche (home to "yeti" legends), the venerated Tengboche Monastery, and more. Includes nine nights

in Sherpa-owned lodges (no camping!) and four nights in a first-class hotel. All meals included except three lunches and three dinners. From \$4,195. 800-368-2794, [www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/nepal/everest-lodge-teahouse-trek/](http://www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/nepal/everest-lodge-teahouse-trek/)

### FLY DIRECT AND SAVE ON HOTEL ROOMS

Those who like the Key West vibe but hate the long drive from Miami International Airport through the Florida Keys will love the new direct flights offered by American Airlines. Starting



Feb. 15, and running through May 2, the airline is launching seasonal non-stop flights on Saturdays from Boston to Key West, making it the only carrier operating between EYW and BOS. The Keys Collection, a unique group of four Key West hotels, is offering passengers on these flights 20-percent off their stay with the exclusive code "HEYBOS." Located in New Town, in close proximity to Key West's many attractions, the collection includes The Gates Hotel Key West; 24° North Hotel; Hilton Garden Inn Key West; and Fairfield Inn & Suites Key West. Rates from \$135. 305-400-4117, [www.thekeyscollection.com/](http://www.thekeyscollection.com/)

### D.C. HOTEL DEBUTS IN NAVY YARD

The Capitol Riverfront neighborhood is home to a striking new hotel, Thompson Washington D.C. Located in the historic Navy Yard, near the waterfront and Anacostia Riverwalk Trail, the hotel's 225-rooms and suites feature a mid-century modern aesthetic that incorporates industrial patterns and textures found in historic naval structures. The property has partnered with Danny Meyer's Union Square Hospitality Group to debut Maialino Mare, a seafood restaurant with an expansive rooftop bar and 360-degree views of the city and the Anacostia River. Amenities include 7,000 square feet of flexible meeting and event space; state-of-the-art fitness center; and 10 percent off all classes at the nearby Boombox Boxing Club, a boutique fitness studio featur-

ing music-driven, boxing-inspired group fitness classes. Rates from \$359. 202-916-5200, [www.thompsonhotels.com/hotels/washington-dc/district-of-columbia/thompson-washington-dc](http://www.thompsonhotels.com/hotels/washington-dc/district-of-columbia/thompson-washington-dc)

## EVERYWHERE

### TUNISIAN TOWEL FOR BEACH OR POOL

The stylish must-have beach accessory this winter is a Tunisian fouta from Fouta Harissa. These colorful towels are a staple in many Mediterranean households and hammams. Sadly,



many foutas found in markets today are often industrially made. Fouta Harissa is working to preserve artisanal weaving in Tunisia by producing limited collections of high-quality, hand-loomed textiles. A truly international endeavor, the foutas are designed in Brazil and hand woven in the coastal city of Mahdia, Tunisia, using Italian-spun, 100-percent cotton yarn. Easy to pack, they fold up effortlessly, dry quickly, and can be used as a poolside fashion garment, statement scarf, beach towel, and travel blanket. Available in a variety of patterns and colors, in two sizes. From \$79. [www.foutaharissa.com/](http://www.foutaharissa.com/)

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