

Condé Nast Traveler

THE WORLD MADE LOCAL

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2022

TIMELESS CLASSICS

Skiing Through **FRANCE**
Beach Days in **TURKS & CAICOS**
Rediscovering **EGYPT**
The Resilience of **NAPA**



+ **The Gold List 2022**
Our editors' favorite places,
hotels, and cruises



The façade of the new Mosque of Mohamed Abdulkhaliq Gargash

DUBAI, FAST AND SLOW

The city continues to live up to its reputation for excess, but now there are more places than ever to stop and take a breath

For more than a quarter of a century, the name Dubai has conjured images of big money, fast cars, and sleek towers rising from the sands symbolizing the Emirate's international ambitions. During that time, nearly every major player in fashion, restaurants, and hotels has wanted a piece of the action there. Consequently, the City of Gold has emerged as a global hub of travel and thought leadership—both of which are currently represented in the pavilions of the pandemic-delayed Expo 2020 Dubai, on view through the end of March, which explores the future of life on Earth. Later this year, the Royal Atlantis Resort & Residences, the new sibling to Atlantis, The Palm, will open, seeking to establish a more sustainable model for ultra-luxury resorts. There's also fresh thinking in the artsy enclave of Al Quoz, where a groundbreaking new mosque and an art-house cinema screening regional works celebrate the modern UAE in different ways. And in the food scene, which is moving away from maximalism toward smaller-scale concepts from Emirati restaurateurs. There's even a low-slung beach escape joining a hotel scene known for its stratosphere-piercing heights. All of which is to say, there's more to Dubai than you think—which is a great reason to visit now. →

PHOTOGRAPH: GERRY O'LEARY

Dining, Diversified

Intimate, no-frills hangouts with local flair are joining innovative upscale newcomers to bring new texture to the city's culinary scene



Clockwise from top left: At Mimi Kakushi; alfresco at Lucky Fish; the Med-style Ula; half shells at Dibba Bay Oysters

For years, titans like Bottura, Boulud, Robuchon, and Ramsay defined the dining scene here. Though big-name outposts are still opening (including blinged-out Japanese fusion Sushi Samba two months ago), a more homegrown approach is also emerging. On the peaceful shores of Umm Suqeim's Fishing Harbor 2 lies the tiny **Dibba Bay Oysters**, where in-the-know locals share platters of Fujairah oysters while gazing at bobbing fishing boats and blood-orange sunsets. In the Greens neighborhood is **Kinoya**: Born out of chef Neha Mishra's sold-out supper club, it is now a low-key Japanese izakaya-and-ramen room where slurping is encouraged. Local restaurateur Mahmood Al Khamis went big on something small with his trendy warehouse-style pizzeria **Moon Slice**, which opened early last year.

Even with all these casual newcomers, there are still plenty of openings where you'll feel underdressed without a jacket. At the chichi Restaurant Village at Four Seasons Resort Dubai at Jumeirah Beach, local La Cantine group has opened **Mimi Kakushi**, a sultry stained-glass-lined dining room inspired by 1920s Osaka, where well-heeled diners munch on Wagyu and foie gras gyozas and sip sake cocktails. At The Palm Jumeirah, newcomers include **Ula**, The Palm's new Med-inspired hangout, decked with beachy boho touches like rattan lights. Over on the Palm West Beach development, must-visits include trendy Balinese-themed restaurant **Koko Bay** and Riviera-inspired **Lucky Fish**, where diners enjoy lazy lobster-and-rosé-fueled lunches overlooking the Marina skyline.

THE INSIDER

Indie-theater Cinema Akil cofounder Butheina Kazim on her favorite spots in town

> QUIET PLACE

"The café Maisan 15 is an unpretentious, ever-changing pocket of quiet in a largely uninspiring area. Founded by Rami Farook, an artist and true patron of the arts, it is a gift that keeps on giving."

> TOP RESTAURANT

"Flooka in Dubai Marine—nothing beats that perfect combination of old-school Dubai vibes, perfectly cooked crispy whitebait, and a tableful of mezze after a few hours in the sun at Jumeirah Beach."

> NIGHT OUT

"Take the metro to Baniyas Square Station and build up an appetite by spending a couple of hours walking in all directions within a 20-minute radius—toward the creek, toward Naif souk, Al Rigga Street. Then eat kunafa at Aroos Damascus."

> COOL HOTEL

"The new German import 25hours Hotel One Central, not far from the Dubai World Trade Centre, is carnivalesque and zany."



The chandelier at the SLS's Privilege rooftop bar

Gilded Dreams

In its sheer ambition, bling, and megaphone glamour, Dubai's hotel scene may outpace even Vegas's. This latest crop ups the ante

SLS Dubai Hotel & Residences The max-volume brand pulled out all the stops for its Middle East debut last April. Everything is over-the-top, including the rooftop Privilege pool bar, located 75 stories up, and the Sky Family King suites that clock in at 990 square feet, with views of Burj Khalifa. The quirky duck sculptures at the infinity pool and the 12 Chairs Caviar Bar are similarly full-on, though the impressive stained glass in some common spaces is that rarest of qualities in Dubai: restrained. *From \$340; sbe.com*

Raffles The Palm Checking into the second Dubai outpost of the Singapore luxury brand is like entering Versailles—a riot of gold paneling, crystal chandeliers, chaise longues, and manicured lawns. Modernity comes by way of the chic beach club operated by Bulldozer Group, a late-night jazz bar, and a slick Japanese-Italian restaurant. *From \$1,200; rafflesthepalmdubai.com*

Anantara World Islands Resort Dubai Technically speaking, this tropical escape, the first hotel in the ambitious World Islands Project in the Persian Gulf, is a 15-minute speedboat ride from central Dubai. Come for the thatched-roof villas, white sands, bright flowers, outdoor bathrooms, and loads of jute and rattan without having to hop a flight. *From \$650; anantara.com*

Address Beach Resort The first reason to visit the first resort from the home-grown team behind downtown Dubai's Address Hotel is the sands. But be sure to take the elevator 77 floors up to the world's highest infinity pool, which offers views over the Arabian Sea and makes Dubai's neon blink feel superfluous. *From \$1,300; addresshotels.com*



MUST-VISIT NEIGHBORHOOD: Al Quoz

For years, Middle Eastern creatives, including Iranian and Syrian artists, have been transforming this gritty district into an appealing arts enclave that contrasts with the surrounding Emirati glitz. Most of the action is centered on Alserkal Avenue, home to galleries and concept cafés. It's where you will find the groundbreaking **Cinema Akil**, which has shown an assortment of important regional films, like *Captains of Zaatari*, about Syrian refugees in Jordan, since 2018. Close by is the bespoke fragrance lab **Oo La Lab** and **The Mud House Studio**, a cool two-story pottery workshop that opened last May, selling vases and plates shaped by hand. The newest addition to an already thriving café scene that includes independents such as Boston Lane, Cassette, and Nightjar Coffee Roasters is sexy **Le Guépard**, an all-day spot for sophisticated global plates. A pair of private dining rooms transforms into a late-night hot spot with velvet couches and curtains, making it precisely the sort of place you want to be after a day of gallery-hopping.

AND WHILE YOU'RE THERE...

The can't-miss attraction in Al Quoz right now is the sleek new **Mosque of Mohamed Abdulkhaliq Gargash**. Architect Sumaya Dabbagh—one of the first women to design a mosque in the UAE—took inspiration from the geometric patterns and Arabic calligraphy that have been hallmarks of mosque design for centuries to create an airy, light-filled modern structure in gleaming ivory that channels a sublime sense of peace.

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