

DUBAI inspection visit JULY 2012

I recently visited Dubai courtesy of The Private Travel Company.

I really wasn't sure what to expect before I went to Dubai. I had heard there was a lot of Building work going on and it was really built up but I did not find this at all, I only saw a small amount of building work which would not affect the hotels that I visited and the distance between each of the hotels was also quite spacious.

Dubai is one of the seven emirates that make up the United Arab Emirates. It is rather like an independent city-state and is the most modern and progressive emirate in the UAE, developing at an unbelievable pace in the tourist and trade sectors especially. It is renowned for its shopping, its sunshine, its high quality of service, its great hotels and sporting activities hosted by Dubai, include the Desert Classic, Dubai Tennis Championships and Rugby Sevens.

Best time to plan a visit to Dubai

The best time to visit Dubai is during the period October and April, as the weather is rather pleasant during this phase (with temperatures in the low 30s). During the summer months, Dubai is extremely hot with temperatures even going up to 48°C.

The Ramadan period- if you plan to shop and indulge yourself in the restaurants and bars in Dubai, then the Ramadan period is best avoided. The exact dates of Ramadan vary from year to year so ask me for this year's dates before you book.

Time

The UAE is four hours ahead of GMT, and there is no time change during summer.

Language

Arabic is the main language in Dubai. Majority of the local people here can understand and speak English which is a major benefit .

Getting to Dubai-

The airlines that operate direct flights to Dubai are:-

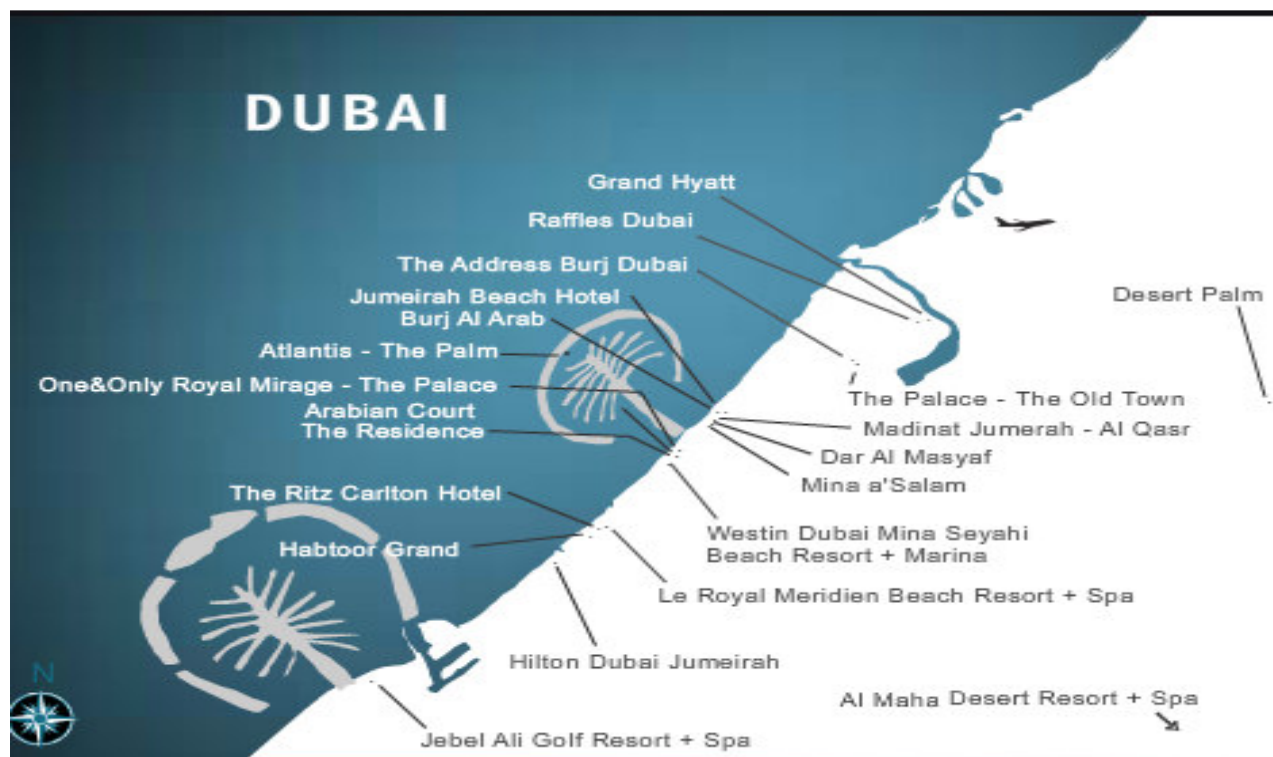
*Emirates *British Airways *Virgin Atlantic

Total journey time:-6 hours 55 minutes

There are a range of flights going to Dubai morning and night however if you are only going for a few days

I think the night flight is better, as you have a full day ahead of you when you arrive. But perhaps for a longer holiday the more comfortable day flights are better

Map showing the location of the hotels in Dubai



The hotels I inspected were the

Al Maha, A Luxury Desert Resort & Spa



Al Maha, is a conservation resort, located within the Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve, an area comprising of 225 square kilometres.

It's a perfect destination for a quiet and restful leisure break along with some of the best dining.

The Al Maha has 42 Bedouin Suites which offer luxury and exclusivity. Al Maha also has Royal, Emirates and Presidential Suites.

Beautifully furnished with a unique collection of authentic regional artefacts and antiquities. Every Suite at Al Maha offers spectacular views of the Dubai Desert Reserve. Enjoy two different complimentary desert activities every day as part of the stay.

The activities that take place are:-

- *Falconry
- *Nature Walk
- *Horse Riding
- *Desert Drive
- *Wildlife Drive
- *Camel Trek
- *Sundowners
- *Archery

Timeless Spa-

Timeless Spa has a gifted team of international spa therapists, specialising in a wide range of wellness, rejuvenation and beauty therapies.

The Al Maha has been recognized with many awards; Al Maha was also on the Gold List of Condé Naste Traveller in 2009.

Key Points-

- *All-Suite Hotel with own infinity pool

- *Full Board Resort

- *Meals can be eaten in suites-breakfast and lunch can be served in your suite. There may be a supplement if you have the 5 course dinner served to your suite.

- *The resort is not suitable for children (Al Maha does not take children under the age of 10 years old) I wouldn't recommend the Al Maha to families as there are no children's clubs or activities for children.

- *Couple, Singles, Honeymoon- suitable for those who just want to relax and not do a lot

- *Would be great for a twin centre property

- *Very private cannot see other Suites

- *Afternoon Tea served in main building

- *Spa area has its own oasis pool, sauna, steam room, indoor Jacuzzi and traditional Arabic lounge.

- *Buggy's take you around the resort so no need to do much walking

- *Free Wi-Fi in all Suites

Overview-

The Al Maha was an amazing property.

This was my favourite property of all those that we stayed in while in Dubai.

I would recommend this hotel to all of my customers.

The resort, staff, food and overall experience was excellent.

Park Hyatt

The Park Hyatt Dubai hotel, a luxury waterfront retreat adjacent to the world-famous Dubai Creek Golf & Yacht Club



This Dubai Creek hotel offers 225 luxury rooms & suites; all of which offer stunning views overlooking the Dubai Creek and marina.

Visitors to this Dubai Creek hotel in Dubai may choose from a number of activities. Guests can enjoy a round of golf at one of the nearby golf clubs, or pamper themselves at the luxury Amara Spa, one of the finest in Dubai. Park Hyatt Dubai also offers a 25 meter outdoor swimming pool, which features in-set palm trees and four whirlwind Jacuzzis, and private fishing and charter yachts, making it the ideal resort hotel in Dubai.

The 5 star hotel is home to an inspired assortment of restaurants & lounges, including the award-winning French brassiere Traiteur, The Thai Kitchen, Café Arabesque, The Terrace and The Lobby Lounge.



Key Points-

- *Views overlooking the harbour
- *18 hole golf course close to the hotel
- *Shopping Mall about 20 minutes from the hotel
- *Wide choice of restaurants and bar areas
- *Wi-Fi needs to be paid for in the rooms but is free in the lounge area
- *The hotel takes children of all ages

Overview-

I was surprised how much I liked the Park Hyatt Hotel.

There is so much available at the hotel such as the Spa, bars and an amazing a choice of restaurants.

This hotel would be great for a short break, with the shopping centre and golf course close to the hotel.

The Ritz Carlton



The Ritz-Carlton has an exclusive beachfront location.

The hotel has 138 guests rooms and suite with private balcony or patio overlooking the pool, garden and Arabian Golf.

Adjacent to the golf club and shopping malls

The hotel has 350 metre of private sandy beaches. Situated right across the cosmopolitan JBR Walk, Dubai's only beachfront promenade of luxury retail shops and al fresco restaurants and cafes

Overview

The Ritz Carlton is a lovely comfortable hotel that I would definitely recommend.

The evening meal and breakfast that we had were extremely good quality.

The rooms are very spacious

The hotel is in an excellent location to see all the sights of Dubai.



Key Points-

- *Shopping Mall about 20 minutes from the hotel
- *Own Private Beach
- *The hotel is good for children with its own Ritz Kids club
- *Wide choice of restaurants to dine in
- *Spa Rituals
- *Afternoon Tea served daily
- *Close to the Dubai Air show which will take place in 2013

Banyan Tree Al Wadi Desert Resort



The Banyan Tree Al Wadi is situated Wadi Khadeja. The Banyan Tree Al Wadi is the first desert resort in the United Arab Emirates to offer an all-pool villa concept.

This resort spans over 100 hectares, of which 60 hectares are dedicated as a nature reserve.

The resort is a 45-minute drive from Dubai International Airport, a 2 hour drive from Abu Dhabi International Airport, and a 20-minute drive from the vibrant Ras Al Khaimah city centre.

To facilitate the convenience from the Banyan Tree Al Wadi Desert Resort to Banyan Tree Beach Resort, they provide complimentary shuttle limousine scheduled throughout the day.
It takes approximately 35 minutes each way.

There are a range of activities that you can take part in (there is a charge for them)

- *Falconry
- *Camel Activities
- *Horse Riding
- *Daily Nature Reserve Activities
- *Beach Resort Activities
- *Pearl Culture Tour in RAK
- *Seawings
- *Mountain Sports
- *Water Sports
- *Land Based
- *Marine excursions

Key Points-

- *No main pool at the resort only pool is the one with the Suites
- *Banyan Tree Spa Al Wadi offers a wide range of Spa Treatments
- Destination Dining- Private BBQ AND Saffron Tower Dining
- *Theme night for dining
- *Children's Clubs

Overview-

I loved this resort, but there is not much to do close by.
If you are looking for a nice relaxing break away, then this resort will be such a great choice.
It's nice that all of the villas have their own pool, but you can feel somewhat isolated, so I think it would have been nice to have the option of a main pool.

Jumeirah Beach



The Jumeriah Beach was inspired by the shape of a breaking wave, Jumeirah Beach Hotel stands 93 metres high and 275 metres long.

Jumeirah Beach Hotel continues to welcome travellers seeking a luxurious holiday and unparalleled relaxation, with 598 rooms and suites, 19 private beachside villas, over 15 restaurants and bars, Sinbad's Kids Club, spa and health club, five swimming pools, seven tennis courts, a private beach and lots more, making it a resort for the whole family

Key Points-

- *598 rooms and suites
- *19 private beachside villas
- *Over 20 restaurants and bars
- *The Pavilion Marina & Sports Club

- *Complimentary access to Wild Wadi Water Park
- *The Hub
- *Sinbad's Kids Club
- *Not all of the rooms have balconies. The rooms that have balconies are situated on the lower level of the hotel
- *Many of the rooms have just been renovated. The feel to the room is very modern and fresh. The older rooms as called the Club room and the new updated rooms are the premium room
- *Jumeriah Beach has set floor at the hotel for smoking guests so it's important to request smoking or non-smoking

Overview-

I think that the Jumeriah Beach is one of the best family hotels in Dubai. There is so much for everybody of all ages.

The hotel has everything, direct access to the beach, water park, kids clubs and much more.

I would sell this property with confidence to families.

The hotel is good for all age's groups.

Burj Al Arab



Rising from the Arabian Gulf on an Island 280 metres from the shores of the renovated Jumeriah beach and designed to resemble the graceful sails of an Arabian dhow, Burj Al Arab soars to a height of 321 metres.

Burj Al Arab comprises of a choice of one, two and three Bedroom Deluxe Suites, Panoramic and Club Suites, the Presidential Suite and the two Royal Suites.

There are a wide range of dining experiences at the hotel.

However the one that most stands out is the Al Mahara which is renowned for the finest seafood, guests are transported to Dubai's most unique restaurant by a simulated submarine ride to discover a magical aquarium environment.

Key Points-

- *Burj Al Arab Spa

- *As the hotel is part of the Jumeriah Group guests have access to the wild wadi water park and also have the kids club

- *Skyview Bar is suspended 200 metres above sea level, spectacular views are guaranteed.

Overview-

The property was very different to how I imagined it would be.

The rooms at the hotel were very large. The furnishings at the hotel were very bright.

Even though the hotel has children's facilities, I would recommend families to stay at the Jumeriah Beach, the other hotel within the Jumeriah group.

I would say this property would be more suitable for couples.

Madinat Jumeirah



Madinat Jumeriah is a unique world of startling waterways meandering through the elegant architectures of an Arabian citadel.

The Mina A'Salam and the AL Qasr are two world class hotels that stand on either side of the traditional souk Madinat Jumeriah.

Keypoints-

- *Two grand boutique hotels and Courtyard summer houses

- *Traditional Abras

- *44 world class restaurants and bars
- *Free internet access in all rooms and suites
- *Traditional souk with a wide range of shops
- *Talise Spa and Wellness Services
- *2 km of pristine, private beach
- *Complimentary Wild Wadi Waterpark access
- *The Quay Health club

Overview-

The Madinat Jumeriah is a huge resort that is joined together by waterways. Guests can get a little boat to take them between the different areas. Excellent for families, as interconnecting rooms are available. The food at the hotel was lovely. We had a buffet lunch and the choice of the different foods was fantastic.

Movenpick Hotel Ibn Battuta Gate



Ibn Battuta Gate Hotel is located next to the Ibn Battuta Mall, offering excellent shopping and entertainment.
The hotel is also close to Dubai Marina and the beaches of The Palm Jumeriah.

Key Points:-

- *The hotel offers a bus every 2 hours taking guests to the beach area
- *Thursday and Friday's the hotel put on special events
- *Across the road to the shopping mall
- *Guests can choose from Bed and Breakfast, Half Board and All Inclusive

Overview-

I like this hotel, especially as it offers different events during the week.
The only thing I didn't like was that some of the rooms have views of electricity pylons but I can advise about which room type to book.
I like the fact that the hotel offers all inclusive I think this would appeal to, many travellers.

One & Only Royal Mirage



Overlooking Palm Island Bay, the resort is composed of three distinct environments- each flowing into the next:-The Palace, Arabian Court and Residence and Spa.

The Palace-is a domain where guests may wander amidst the abundant gardens or stroll amongst the meandering water features.

Arabian Court-dramatic architecture creates symmetry, amidst a landscape of fountains, walkways and lush gardens.

Residence and Spa- is an intimate sanctuary with private dining room and library for guests. It has a private pool with great beach access.

Key Points-

- *Water sports
- *Land sports
- *Five minutes from eight world class PGA 18 hole golf courses.
- *Spa
- *Kids Only – this is the kids club for children from 4-11 and babysitting

Overview-

The One and Only Royal Mirage was truly memorable.

The different sections of the hotel have something for everybody.

The hotel grounds were amazing.

We were lucky enough to have a lunch at the hotel and the food was incredible.

One & Only The Palm



Located on the peninsula of one of the world's most spectacular landscapes, Palm Island.

One & Only The Palm evokes a sense of understated elegance and distinctive luxury featuring immaculate gardens and fountains.

Key Points-

- *Adult Only restaurant

- *All restaurants in the hotel are from a menu no buffet

- *Children's club from the age of 4-11 (younger children can go but a parent or nanny would need to go with them)

- *One & Only Private Spa

Overview-

The Only & Only The Palm was one of my favorite hotels that I had the pleasure of visiting.

I would say that out of all the One & Only hotels, I would say that the other hotels cater more for children.

The hotel would be great for large parties, as they have the accommodation that would be suitable for this.

The Atlantis



The Atlantis was built around the lost continent of Atlantis.

The hotel is located on Palm Island 35 km from Dubai International Airport

Key Points-

- *Unlimited complimentary access to Aqua adventurer

- *Unlimited access to the underwater world of The Lost Chambers Aquarium

- *20 Restaurants, bars and lounges

- *1.4km beach
- *Shia Spa & Fitness
- *Atlantis Kids Club -3-12 years old
- *Over 25 outlets

Overview-

The Atlantis was a very busy hotel. It would be great for families, as there are so many activities for children, including; the dolphins, waterparks etc.

The hotel would not be suitable if you were looking for a relaxing break away.

Cove Rotana Resort & Spa

The Cove Rotana Resort is located on a water inlet on the Ras Al Khaimah beachfront overlooking the Arabian Gulf.

Its 8 km from the city centre, 87 km's drive from Dubai.

The Cove Rotana offers 204 rooms and 78 one, two and three bedroom villas.

Key Points-

- *600 metres beach
- *Flipper's kids club
- *Half Board and All Inclusive options

Overview-

Out of all of the hotels that we visited on the trip the Cove Rotana didn't really impress me.

I didn't really like the feel to the resort.

I think some of the rooms with a pool would be dangerous for families with small children. The reason being there is a drop from some of the pools down.

I would say if guests were on a budget for a family or group away, then this hotel would be o.k for them.

We had an evening meal in one of the restaurants which was a buffet.

There wasn't much choice and the standard of food wasn't great.

The meals for the Half Board and all Inclusive would be buffet for every night.

However guests would need to pay extra to dine in Basilico.

Summary

My overall opinion of Dubai is that I loved it! The hotels are magnificent, no doubt because the next new hotel is trying to outdo the last one built. The choice of facilities are varied and Dubai itself has plenty to do. It is a perfect winter break destination, either for a short break if you book the night flights or a longer stay. Dubai is also perfect for a multi centre holiday within itself. I loved the desert resorts but they are remote and by booking a Dubai City you can relax and enjoy the shopping in one trip.

Dubai because of Emirates Airlines is also a great hub for twinning with, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, the Seychelles and Mauritius. 10 nights in Dubai is the maximum all you would need to see the sights which makes this the two centre capital of the world for your next holiday

If you would like to know any further details about Dubai or any of its hotels please contact me.

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