

NEIGHBOURHOODS

top picks

- **Dubai Museum** (p61) This low-key museum tells the Dubai story with minimal fuss and plenty of charm.
- **Deira Gold Souq** (p53) All that glitters is gold (and occasionally silver) at this colourful market.
- **Deira Spice Souq** (p53) Just follow your nose to the best buys at this atmospheric souq.
- **Bastakia Quarter** (p61) Get lost in the narrow lanes of Dubai's old town.
- **Jumeirah Mosque** (p75) The only mosque non-Muslims can visit – don't miss the regular guided tours.
- **Burj Al Arab** (p75) The world's most extravagant hotel – you'll either love it or hate it.
- **Al-Ahmadiya School** (p58) This splendid old school building offers a peaceful retreat from the bustle of Deira.
- **Madinat Jumeirah** (p75) A city within a city, the Madinat Jumeirah is a Dubai must-see.
- **Dubai Wildlife & Waterbird Sanctuary** (p71) Head to the flamingo park for a unique skyline view.

What's your recommendation? www.lonelyplanet.com/dubai

NEIGHBOURHOODS

Let's make this absolutely clear. There is no excuse for spending your entire holiday lazing by the pool. It's essential you explore Dubai's sights and no, a trip to the Mall of the Emirates does not count as sightseeing.

Long before it began conquering the desert and the ocean, Dubai centred around the Creek, a 15km inlet that runs through the centre of town. Deira and Bur Dubai hug either side of the Creek and remain the heart and soul of the city. They offer something the megaresorts and gleaming skyscrapers of the new city simply can't provide – real life. For all the billions of dollars spent on making Dubai the greatest show on earth, a five-minute, Dh1 *abra* (water taxi) ride between Deira and Bur Dubai is still the single greatest thrill in the city.

Deira covers Al-Sabkha, the souqs area; Rigga and Al-Mateena, in Deira's centre; and Al-Garhoud, the area between Al-Garhoud Bridge and the airport. Moving from east to west, there are five ways to cross the Creek other than using public transport. There's Al-Shindagha Tunnel, close to the open sea; Al-Maktoum Bridge; the very new Floating Bridge (open 6am to 10pm) near Creekside Park; Al-Garhoud Bridge; and the Business Bay Bridge near Festival City. Despite the widening of Al-Garhoud Bridge, the introduction of two new bridges and a road toll, traffic across the Creek is still terrible, especially from 5pm to 8pm on weekdays.

Bur Dubai takes in the area immediately south of the Creek as far as Al-Dhiyafah Rd, from the sea in the east to Al-Garhoud Bridge in the southwest, including the Shindagha waterfront area; the Bastakia heritage district; busy Karama; and Oud Metha, the area between Al-Maktoum Bridge, Wafi City mall and the Grand Hyatt hotel.

Sheikh Zayed Rd begins at the 2nd Za'abeel Rd, by the edge of Karama and Bur Dubai, and heads southwest towards Jebel Ali as far as Interchange No 4. A throng of iconic skyscrapers including the Emirates Towers, the Shangri-La and the Dusit opened on Sheikh Zayed Rd during Dubai's growth spurt in the late '90s. Also included here is Al-Quoz, an industrial area just off Sheikh Zayed Rd that's home to a growing number of art galleries.

Jumeirah is not to be confused with the hotel group of the same name. It's home to several public beaches, a couple of historical sites and hundreds of luxury villas. The spine of this sprawling area is Jumeirah Rd, which begins by the flagpole at the end of Al-Dhiyafah Rd and runs parallel to the coast for about 16km as far as Al-Sufouh Rd, near Madinat Jumeirah. The road stretches inland a couple of blocks from the sea and takes in a number of areas, including the three Jumeirah areas (logically named 1, 2, 3), Umm Suqeim (1 and 2), Safa, and so on.

We've called the rest of the city New Dubai. This area encompasses everything between the Mall of the Emirates and Jebel Ali, including the Palm Jumeirah and Dubai Marina. With the exception of a few hotels, everything in this area has been built in the last five years and most future developments are happening on this side of town. While Deira and Bur Dubai are best explored by foot, Jumeirah, Sheikh Zayed Rd and New Dubai aren't pedestrian-friendly. If you don't have your own transport and don't want to waste time waiting for taxis, you can go on an organised city tour. For information on the options available, see [p187](#).

'Deira and Bur Dubai hug either side of the Creek and remain the heart and soul of the city... a five-minute, Dh1 *abra* (water taxi) ride between Deira and Bur Dubai is still the single greatest thrill'



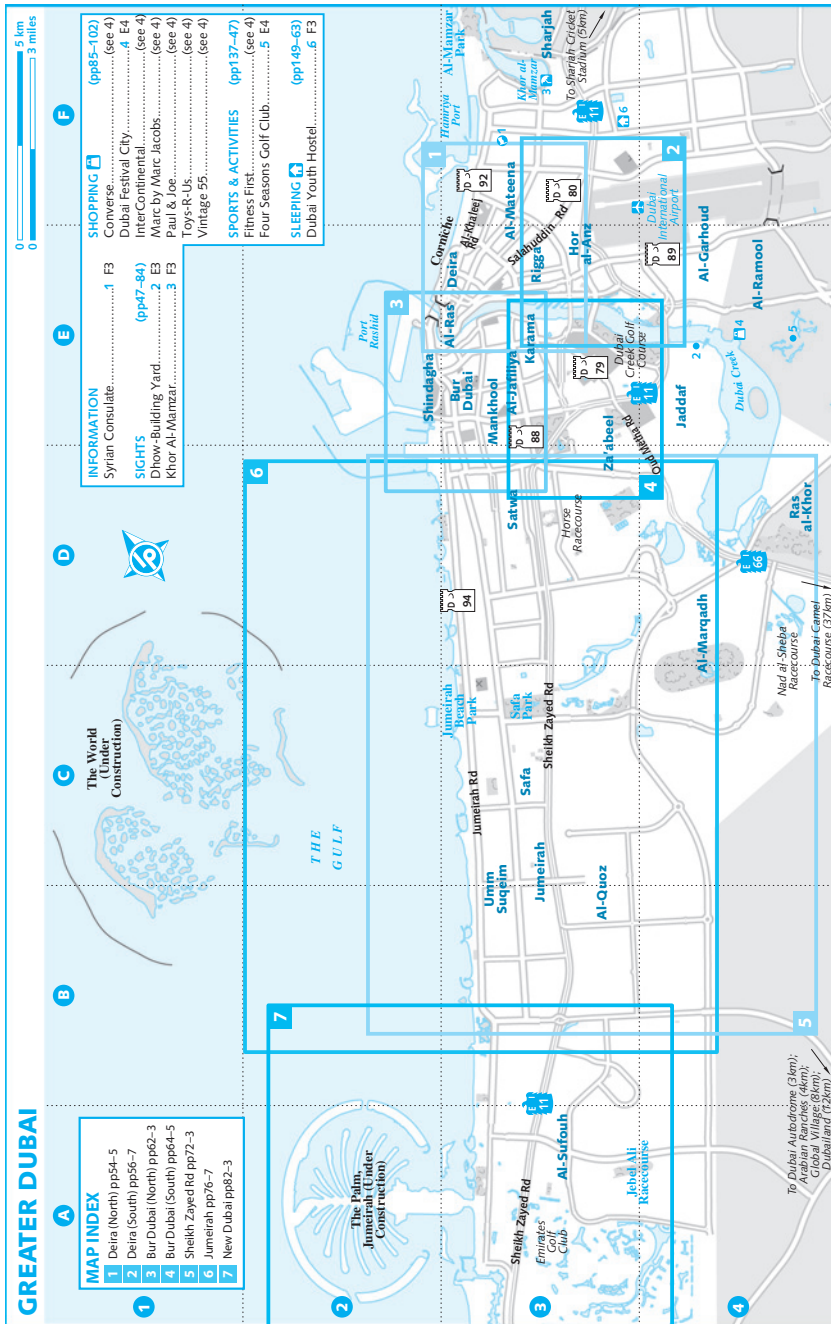
ITINERARY BUILDER

Two days is enough time to explore Bur Dubai and Deira. The area is relatively compact and can be covered by foot, with *abras* (water taxis) or water buses to cross the Creek. Jumeirah, Sheikh Zayed Road and New Dubai are not so pedestrian-friendly and you'll either need to drive or take taxis. While it's fascinating to mix-and-match the old souqs of Deira with the beach resorts of New Dubai, the rush-hour traffic on the bridges can be horrendous, so it makes sense to stick to one side of the Creek at these times of day.

HOW TO USE THIS TABLE

The table below allows you to plan a day's worth of activities in any area of the city. Simply select which area you wish to explore, and then mix and match from the corresponding listings to build your day. The first item in each cell represents a well-known highlight of the area, while the other items are more off-the-beaten-track gems.

AREA	ACTIVITIES	Sights	Shopping	Eating	Drinking	Sports, Spas & Outdoor Activities
Deira		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Al-Ahmadiya School (p58) Dhow Wharfage (p58) Heritage House (p58) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deira Gold Souq (p53) Deira Spice Souq (p53) Pride of Kashmir (p94) Virgin Megastore (p94) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aroos Damascus (p109) Kiku (p108) Thai Kitchen (p114) Verre by Gordon Ramsay (p107) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issimo (p126) Ku-Bu (p126) Terrace (p126) Velvet Lounge (p126) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Al-Mamzar Park (p58) Amara (p140) Dubai Creek Golf Club (p144)
Bur Dubai		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bastakia Quarter (p61) Bur Dubai Souq (p66) Dubai Museum (p61) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amzaan (p96) Five Green (p97) Karama Shopping Centre (p97) Wafi Gourmet (p98) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bastakiah Nights (p111) Fire & Ice (p110) Gazebo (p113) Karachi Darbar (p113) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chi@The Lodge (p131) Ginseng (p126) New Asia Bar (p127) Troyka (p127) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creekside Park (p67) Pharaohs Club (p139) Za'abeel Park (p68)
Sheikh Zayed Road		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B21 Gallery (p71) Meem Gallery (p71) Third Line (p71) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Azza Fahmy Jewellery (p98) Boutique 1 (p99) Emilio Pucci (p99) Organic Foods & Café (p99) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Al-Nafoorah (p116) Amwaj (p114) Exchange Grill (p115) Zaatar W Zeit (p117) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency (p127) Cin-Cin Wine Bar (p128) Lotus One (p128) Vu's Bar (p128) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dubai Wildlife & Waterbird Sanctuary (p71) 1847 (p141)
Jumeirah		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burj Al Arab (p75) Jumeirah Mosque (p75) Madinat Jumeirah (p75) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blue Cactus (p99) Fleurt (p100) Mercato Mall (p100) S*uce (p100) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lime Tree Café (p119) Pisces (p118) Ravi (p119) Zheng He's (p118) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Al-Qasr (p117) Bahri Bar (p128) Sho Cho (p129) Skyview Bar (p129) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jumeirah Beach Park (p78) Talise Spa (p141) Wild Wadi Waterpark (p143)
New Dubai		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ski Dubai (p142) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aizone (p101) Ginger & Lace (p101) Mumbai Se (p102) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almaz by Momo (p121) Nina (p121) Rhodes Mezzanine (p119) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barasti Bar (p130) Maya (p130) Rooftop Bar (p130) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emirates Golf Club (p144) Oriental Hammam (p139) Softtouch Spa (p141)



DEIRA

Eating [p106](#); Entertainment [p125](#); Shopping [p91](#); Sleeping [p151](#)

Dubai isn't meant to look like this anymore. Old, dirty, crowded and chaotic, Deira is a world away from the slick and sanitised city piercing the clouds at the other end of town. Yet at the same time, Deira says more about Dubai than any hotel or shopping mall ever could.

It's been a trading centre for centuries. At the Dhow Wharfage, colourful wooden boats that have spent decades plying the waters between Dubai and Iran arrive with boxes of cuddly toys, televisions and batteries to be sold at the souqs down the road. At these atmospheric ancestors to today's colossal shopping malls, you can sip sugary tea and haggle for bargains with traders who have often worked in the same shop for decades.

Deira is fascinatingly multicultural. The language of the signs on shop windows changes every 50m, from Tamil to Sinhalese, Malayalam, Urdu, Pashto, Tagalog and Amharic. (Don't worry, everybody speaks a little English.) Adventurous foodies can lap up authentic fare in the Syrian, Ethiopian, Iraqi and Afghan parts of Deira, and if you're there at night, prepare for a wild ride. You'll find Russian, Filipino, Lebanese, Indian and Pakistani nightclubs, often all on the same floor and typically featuring ear-rupturingly loud house bands, overpriced beers and plenty of illicitly seedy goings-on. Sound appealing? Honestly, these dives are not without their charms; some of the best live music in the city is there for the taking if you keep your ears, eyes and mind open.

While New Dubai feels like a blend of Singapore and Las Vegas, Deira feels more like a cross between Cairo and Karachi. The authorities, quite understandably, are keen to revitalise the area, to clean it up and gentrify the poorer districts. While no right-minded person would want to sustain poverty for the sake of aesthetic gratification, you can't help but fear the area will lose its unique character. The contrast between Deira and New Dubai is one of the city's most fascinating features; the striking juxtaposition of the old and the new, the haves and the have-nots, and the east and the west.

DEIRA GOLD SOUQ [Map pp54-5](#)

On & around Sikkat al-Khail St, btwn Souq Deira & Old Baladiya Sts

Even to people not interested in buying gold or jewellery, the Gold Souq is impressive for both its size – there are hundreds of shops here – and variety. Every kind of jewellery imaginable is available, from gold, diamonds and pearls to elaborate Arabian and Indian wedding necklaces, bangles and headdresses, to more contemporary styles. Some of it is beautiful, lots of it is incredibly tacky. It's the largest gold market in the region, and one of the largest in the world (with ambitions to rival Antwerp in diamonds). The passing people parade is almost as fascinating as the sheer amount of jewellery. Once you're done with gawking at the bling-

top picks

DEIRA

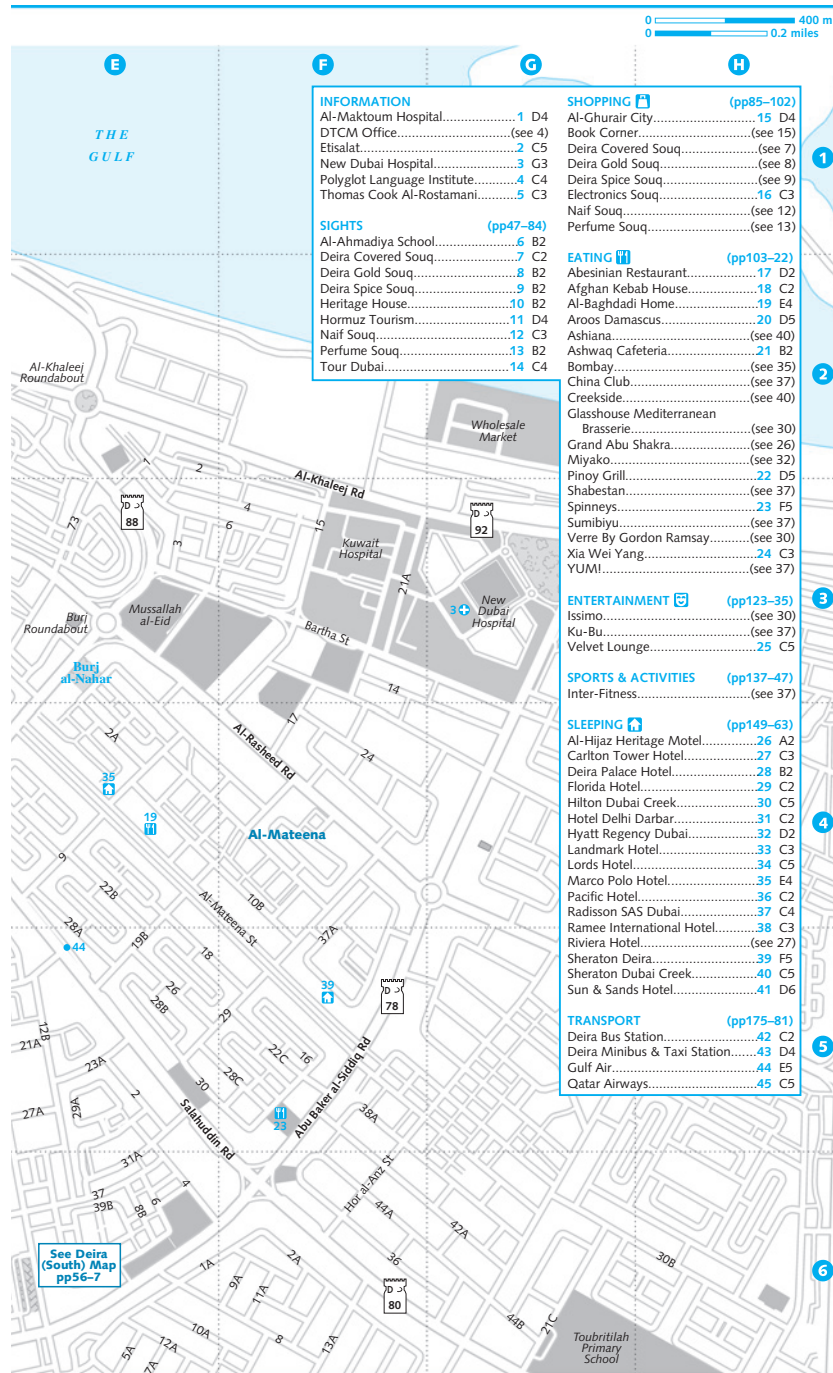
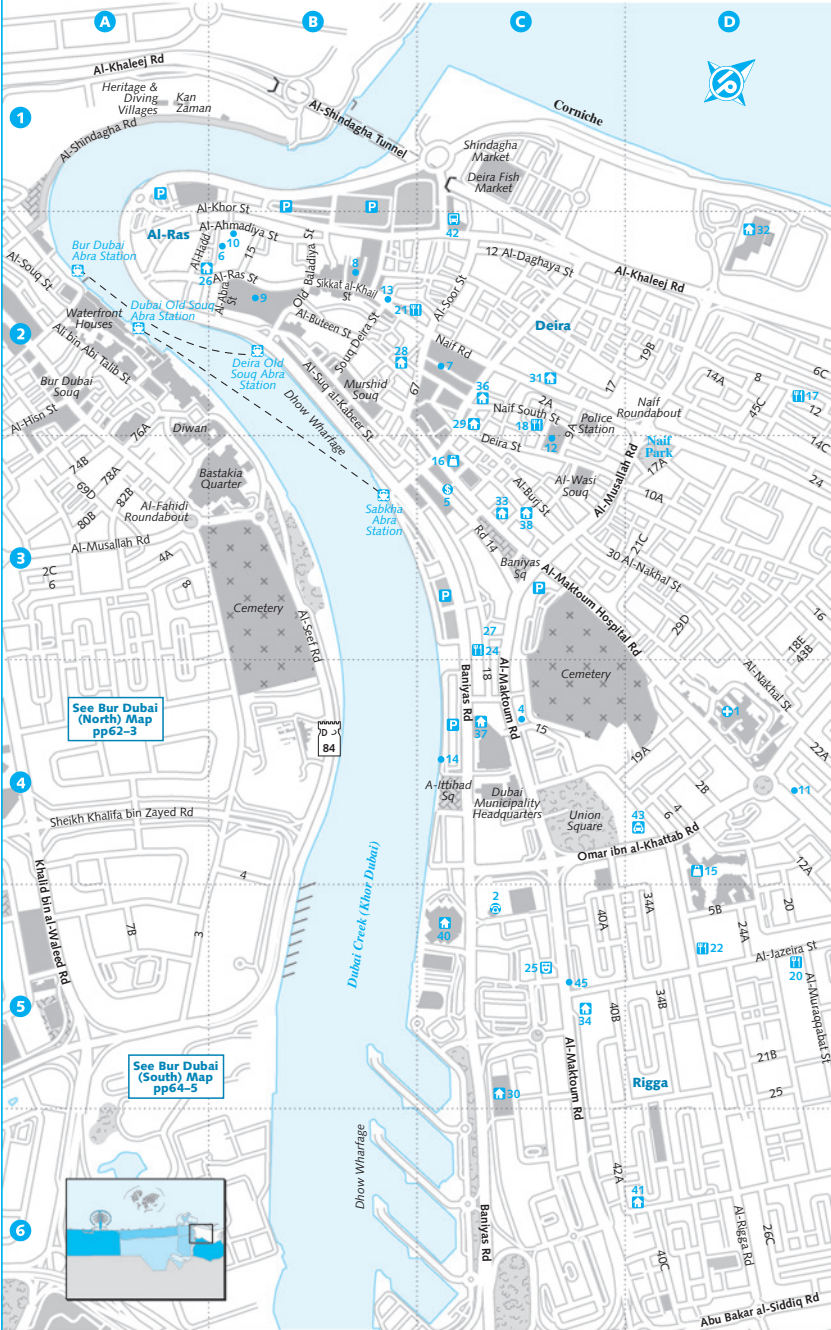
- **The Souqs** Wander through the souqs, with spicy aromas at the Spice Souq (right), glittering gold at the Gold Souq (above), and a glimpse of expat life at the Deira Covered Souq & Naif Souq (p58).
- **Al-Ahmadiya School** (p58) and **Heritage House** (p58) Step back in time to discover the simpler life of old Dubai.
- **Dhow Wharfage** (p58) Marvel at how the dhows manage to stay afloat when there are several cars, a truck, and a warehouse's worth of electrical goods on deck.

tastic jewellery displays, take a seat on one of the wooden benches on the main thoroughfare and note how many different types of people circulate among the atmospheric wooden-latticed arcades: sun-bothered Europeans shopping for gold, blokes from the Indian subcontinent selling copy watches and fake DVDs, sweaty Afghan guys dragging heavy carts of goods here and there, East African women in colourful caftans trading something... It's all rather extraordinary.

DEIRA SPICE SOUQ [Map pp54-5](#)

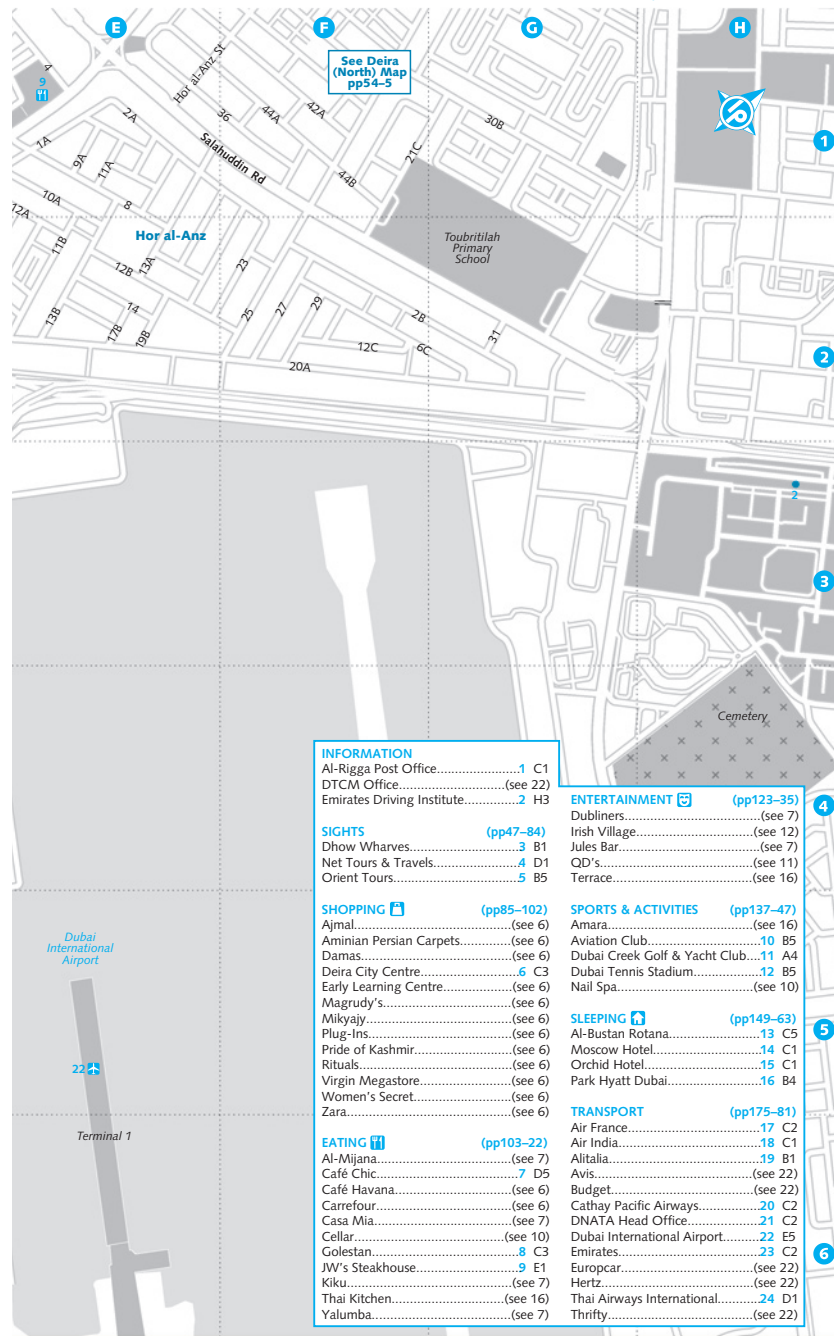
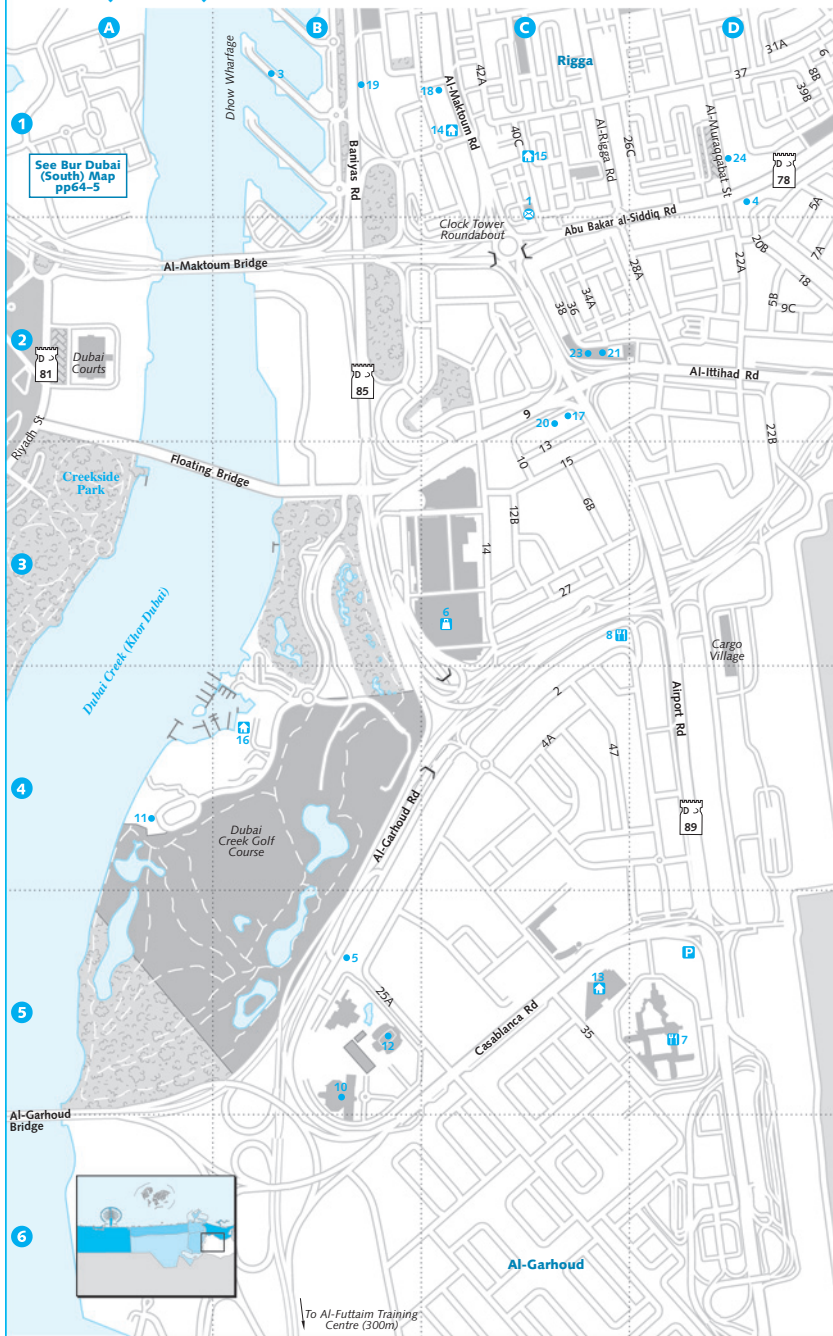
Btwn Baniyas Rd, Al-Sabkha Rd & Al-Abra St
The small but atmospheric covered Spice Souq, once known as the Old Souq, was the largest in the region at the beginning of the 20th century, with over 300

DEIRA (NORTH)



INFORMATION		SHOPPING	
Al-Maktoum Hospital	1 D4	Al-Ghurair City	15 D4
DTCM Office	(see 4)	Book Corner	(see 15)
Etisalat	2 C5	Deira Covered Souq	(see 7)
New Dubai Hospital	3 G3	Deira Gold Souq	(see 8)
Polyglot Language Institute	4 C4	Deira Spice Souq	(see 9)
Thomas Cook Al-Rostamani	5 C3	Electronics Souq	16 C3
		Naif Souq	(see 12)
		Perfume Souq	(see 13)
SIGHTS (pp47-84)		EATING	
Al-Ahmadia School	6 B2	Absenius Restaurant	(pp103-22)
Deira Covered Souq	7 C2	Al-Baghdati Home	18 C4
Deira Gold Souq	8 B2	Aros Damascus	20 D5
Deira Spice Souq	9 B2	Ashiana	(see 40)
Heritage House	10 B2	Ashwaq Cafeteria	21 B2
Hormuz Tourism	11 D4	Bombay	(see 35)
Naif Souq	12 C3	China Club	(see 37)
Perfume Souq	13 B2	Creekside	(see 40)
Tour Dubai	14 C4	Glasshouse Mediterranean	
		Brasserie	(see 30)
		Grand Abu Shakra	(see 32)
		Miyako	(see 36)
		Pinoy Grill	22 D5
		Shabestan	(see 37)
		Spinneys	23 F5
		Sumbiyu	(see 37)
		Verre By Gordon Ramsay	(see 30)
		Xia Wei Yang	24 C3
		YUM!	(see 37)
ENTERTAINMENT (pp123-35)		SPORTS & ACTIVITIES (pp137-47)	
Issimo	(see 30)	Inter-Fitness	(see 37)
Ku-Bu	(see 37)		
Velvet Lounge	25 C5		
SLEEPING (pp149-63)			
Al-Hijaz Heritage Motel	26 A2		
Carlton Tower Hotel	27 C3		
Deira Palace Hotel	28 B2		
Florida Hotel	29 C2		
Hilton Dubai Creek	30 C5		
Hotel Delhi Darbar	31 C2		
Hyatt Regency Dubai	32 D2		
Landmark Hotel	33 C3		
Lords Hotel	34 C5		
Marco Polo Hotel	35 E4		
Pacific Hotel	36 C2		
Radisson SAS Dubai	37 C4		
Ramee International Hotel	38 C3		
Riviera Hotel	(see 27)		
Sheraton Deira	39 F5		
Sheraton Dubai Creek	40 C5		
Sun & Sands Hotel	41 D6		
TRANSPORT (pp175-81)			
Deira Bus Station	42 C2		
Deira Minibus & Taxi Station	43 D4		
Gulf Air	44 E5		
Qatar Airways	45 C5		

DEIRA (SOUTH)



INFORMATION

- Al-Rigga Post Office.....1 C1
- DTCM Office.....(see 22)
- Emirates Driving Institute.....2 H3

SIGHTS

- Dhow Wharves.....3 B1
- Net Tours & Travels.....4 D1
- Orient Tours.....5 B5

SHOPPING

- Ajmal.....(see 6)
- Aminian Persian Carpets.....(see 6)
- Damas.....(see 6)
- Deira City Centre.....6 C3
- Early Learning Centre.....(see 6)
- Magrudy's.....(see 6)
- Mikray.....(see 6)
- Plug-Ins.....(see 6)
- Pride of Kashmir.....(see 6)
- Rituals.....(see 6)
- Virgin Megastore.....(see 6)
- Women's Secret.....(see 6)
- Zara.....(see 6)

EATING

- Al-Mijana.....(see 7)
- Café Chic.....7 D5
- Café Havana.....(see 6)
- Carrefour.....(see 6)
- Casa Mia.....(see 7)
- Cellar.....(see 10)
- Golestan.....8 C3
- JW's Steakhouse.....9 E1
- Kiku.....(see 7)
- Thai Kitchen.....(see 16)
- Yalumba.....(see 7)

ENTERTAINMENT

- Dubliners.....(see 7)
- Irish Village.....(see 12)
- Jules Bar.....(see 7)
- QD's.....(see 11)
- Terrace.....(see 16)

SPORTS & ACTIVITIES

- Amara.....(see 16)
- Aviation Club.....10 B5
- Dubai Creek Golf & Yacht Club.....11 A4
- Dubai Tennis Stadium.....12 B5
- Nail Spa.....(see 10)

SLEEPING

- Al-Bustan Rotana.....13 C5
- Moscow Hotel.....14 C1
- Orchid Hotel.....15 C1
- Park Hyatt Dubai.....16 B4

TRANSPORT

- Air France.....17 C2
- Air India.....18 C1
- Alitalia.....19 B1
- Avis.....(see 22)
- Budget.....(see 22)
- Cathay Pacific Airways.....20 C2
- DNATA Head Office.....21 C2
- Dubai International Airport.....22 E5
- Emirates.....23 C2
- Europcar.....(see 22)
- Hertz.....(see 22)
- Thai Airways International.....24 D1
- Thrifty.....(see 22)

little shops trading their wares. Travellers shouldn't expect to see an Istanbul-like bazaar – they'll be disappointed – but this tiny aromatic market is still worth a half-hour of your time to take in the wonderfully restored wind-towers and the pungent aromas from the jute sacks. The place is brimming with frankincense and *oud*, herbs and spices, dried lemons and chillies, nuts, pulses and more. This is a working souq, not just a tourist attraction, so the tiny shops also sell groceries, plastics and other household goods for people living in the area and the sailors from the *dhow*s. Good buys include incense burners, saffron, rose water, henna kits and *sheesha* pipes.

AL-AHMADIYA SCHOOL [Map pp54–5](#)

☎ 226 0286; Al-Ahmadiya St, near Gold Souq; ☎ 8am–7.30pm Sat–Thu, 2.30–7.30pm Fri Sheikh Mohammed bin Ahmed bin Dal-mouk established Al-Ahmadiya, Dubai's first school, in 1912, and his father Sheikh Ahmed owned the traditional house adjoining it. Semiformal schools such as these were set up by sheikhs and wealthy merchants to teach the Holy Quran, grammar, Arabic calligraphy, mathematics, literature and astronomy, and while most students paid a couple of rupees to attend, the sheikhs paid for the poor students. Very special is the simplicity of the architecture and the exquisite detail – check out the intricate carving within the arches of the courtyard inside and the decorative gypsum panels near the entrance outside.

HERITAGE HOUSE [Map pp54–5](#)

☎ 226 0286; Al-Ahmadiya St; ☎ 8am–7.30pm Sat–Thu, 2.30–7.30pm Fri Feeling peckish? At this renovated 1890 courtyard house, visitors are treated to cups of tea and little bowls of chick peas, a traditional Emirati snack. Don't race off the moment you've finished your free food, because this is a rare opportunity to see inside a wealthy pearl merchant's residence. Like the old Bastakia buildings, the house is built from coral and gypsum, and has a central courtyard onto which all rooms look, plus verandas to prevent sunlight from heating the rooms. The charming staff are more than happy to show you around and refill your bowl of chick peas, should you still be hungry.

DHOW WHARFAGE [Map pp56–7](#)

Baniyas Rd

*Dhow*s are long, flat, wooden sailing vessels used in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea, and they've docked at the Creek since the 1830s when the Maktoums established a free-trade port, luring merchants away from Persia. The *dhow*s here now trade with Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Oman, India, Yemen, Somalia and Sudan, and you'll see all kinds of crazy cargo – air-conditioners, flat-screen TVs, mattresses, kitchen sinks, clothes, canned food, chewing gum, car tyres, cars, even trucks – almost all of it re-exported after arriving by air from countries like China, South Korea and Singapore. Try to chat to the sailors if you can – if you find one who speaks English, you'll learn that it takes a day to get to Iran by sea and seven days to Somalia, and the *dhow* captains often earn as little as \$100 a month, the stevedores even less. If your sailor friend is in a chatty mood, he may even regale you with real-life pirate stories. The gangs of thieves that stalk the waters off Yemen and Somalia sometimes make life very tough for Dubai's hard-working *dhow* sailors.

DEIRA COVERED SOUQ & NAIF SOUQ

[Map pp54–5](#)

Covered Souq btwn Al-Sabkha Rd, 67 St & Naif Rd; Naif Souq btwn Naif South St, 9a St & Deira St Unfortunately not much of the old covered souqs that existed around 30 years ago remain now – the [Deira Spice Souq](#) (p53) is all that's left of the Old Souq, once the largest in the Gulf. Naif Souq is covered, like traditional bazaars, while nearby Deira Covered Souq is covered only in parts and is more a warren of small shops on narrow lanes spreading across a number of old Deira blocks. You'll find everything from tacky textiles and plastic kitchenware to Iranian saffron and henna, but even if you're not keen on shopping, the souqs provide an insight into the lives of Emiratis and expat workers in Dubai.

AL-MAMZAR PARK [Map p52](#)

Al-Mamzar Creek; per person/car Dh5/30; ☎ 8am–11pm, women & children only Wed This lush landscaped park is one of Dubai's hidden gems. It stretches across a couple of very pleasant kilometres on a small headland at the mouth of Khor al-Mamzar. Situated on an attractive inlet, just across

from Sharjah, there are lovely white sandy beaches, a swimming pool, barbecues, and kiosks. For kids there are also plenty of open spaces and play areas and a wooden castle. Lifeguards are on duty between 8am and 6pm on at least one of the small beaches. Friday is busy, but during the week you can have the place to yourself.

DEIRA SOUQ STROLL

Walking Tour

1 Spice Souq As soon as you step off the *abra* at Deira Old Souq Abra Station, the heady scents of sumac, cinnamon, cloves and other spices will lure you across to the [Spice Souq](#) (p53). Take some time to explore. Chat to the shopkeepers. If you can't guess what's in those sacks, ask. Buy something (see p93): saffron is excellent value; frankincense, *oud* and an incense burner make a memorable souvenir; and *sheesha* kits are much cheaper here than they are in the malls. When you exit the souq on Al-Abra St, turn right. At the end of the street, turn left onto Al-Ras St, continue to Al-Hadd St and turn right. The intriguing stores on these streets, selling sacks of nuts,

pulses and rice, belong to wholesalers trading mainly with Iran and using the *dhow*s to ply their goods.

2 Heritage House At the end of the street turn right and walk along Al-Ahmadiya St until you arrive at the beautifully restored [Heritage House](#) (opposite). It's worth a brief diversion for an insight into Dubai's history and culture, and you'll enjoy the simple but splendid architecture, exquisite detail and, if you're lucky, a free cup of tea and a bite to eat.

3 Al-Ahmadiya School Situated directly behind Heritage House, [Al-Ahmadiya School](#) (opposite) is another example of simple but elegant early-20th-century architecture. After a brief look round, continue your journey along

WALK FACTS

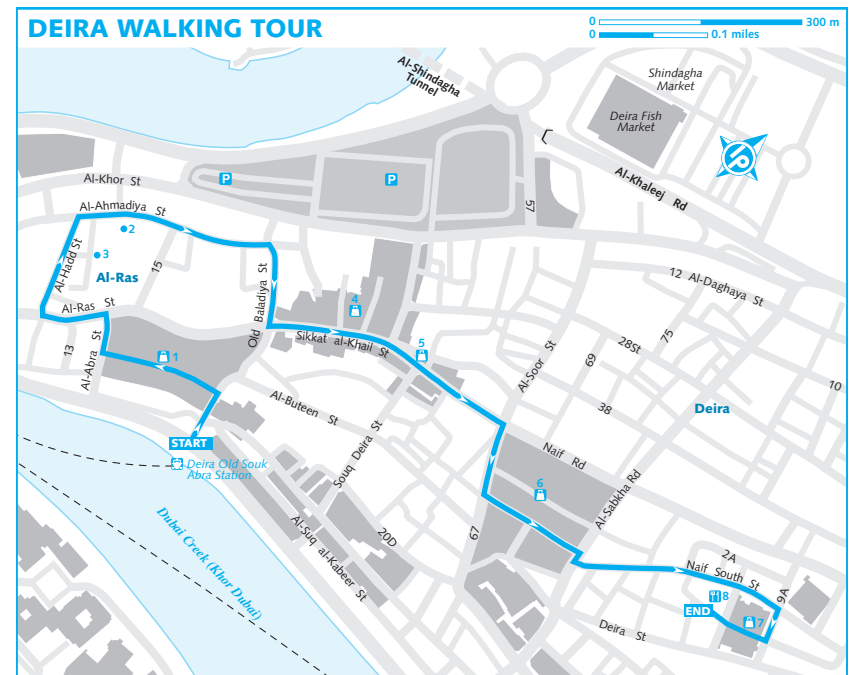
Start Spice Souq

End Afghan Kebab House

Distance 2km

Duration Three hours (including souq shopping)

Fuel Stop Afghan Kebab House



GET LOST: DEIRA

Sometimes it pays to rip up the script and improvise. Some of the most fascinating parts of town aren't home to a single tourist attraction worth recommending, but are brimming with the soul the city is so frequently accused of lacking. Dubai's soul can be found in its people, particularly its migrant workers, and the stories of the hundreds of thousands of individuals who have moved here – some from Saddam's Iraq, others from Afghanistan under the Taliban – in search of a better life.

Dubai is a very safe city – there aren't any no-go areas and even the scariest-looking alleyways will be quite harmless. Be adventurous and spontaneous. Put away the maps and follow your instinct. But before you hurl this guidebook into the Creek, read our suggestions of the best places in Deira in which to get hopelessly, joyously lost.

Naif (Map pp54–5) The area between Naif Rd and Al-Khaleej Rd is a labyrinthine muddle of slim, cluttered streets, and one of the best places in town for urban photography. It's not always pretty, but here you'll find old men smoking *sheesha* and playing backgammon on the pavements; pockets of Ethiopia and Somalia (the potent coffee poured in the African cafés will rouse the sleepest of sleepyheads); hilariously awful fake watches (Rolex, Longines etc); games consoles (including the PolyStation and the notorious Gold Leopard King); perfumes (one's called 'Our Man on the Titanic'); blindingly bright neon shop façades (what's with all the photos of babies?); and the occasional goat, walking nonchalantly down the centre of the street. You just don't get this on the Palm Jumeirah...

Mateena (Map pp54–5) Despite its out-of-the-way location, Al-Mateena St is one of the most walkable roads in town, with wide pavements, palm trees, and a long, narrow park running right through its centre. There are lots of Iraqi restaurants and cafés on this strip, which means you can see *masgouf* – a whole fish sliced in half, spicily seasoned and barbecued over an open flame – being prepared in some of the windows. And with rock gardens, dangling fronds and artificial lakes, the *sheesha* cafés on this road have to be seen to be believed. If you're interested in Arabic food, check out nearby Al-Muraqqabat Rd, where there are excellent Syrian and Palestinian eateries.

Al-Ahmadiya St, turning right into Old Baladiya St, where you'll find more wholesalers, this time trading in *gutras* (white headcloths) and *agals* (headrobes used to hold *gutras* in place), sandals, cheap shoes and Chinese products. If you're considering buying an Emirati national dress as a souvenir, here's the place to shop.

4 Gold Souq Ahead, to the left, is the wooden latticed archway entrance to Dubai's famous **Gold Souq** (p53). Take time to drop into shops to get a closer look at the jaw-dropping (sometimes for the wrong reasons) jewellery. The elaborate gold pieces created for brides' dowries are particularly over the top – find them by the camera flashes going off. Wander along the atmospheric narrow lanes that lead off the main arcade: you'll discover tiny teashops, simple cafeterias, busy tailors and barber shops.

5 Perfume Souq Exiting the souq (usually poorer than when you entered), continue along Sikkat al-Khail St to the **Perfume Souq**. This is really just a string of shops selling heady Arabian *attars* and *oud*, fake 'European' colognes with ridiculous labels, and pretty tinted perfume

bottles. Hang a right into 107 St, where it can be bedlam some nights with hawkers competing to sell off their cut-price clothes, Chinese-made shoes and kitschy souvenirs.

6 Deira Covered Souq Tucked behind these streets is **Deira Covered Souq** (p58) which doesn't look like a traditional souq and isn't covered. Instead you'll find hundreds of little shops on alleys selling everything from textiles to luggage, groceries and *sheesha* pipes. Arriving near Al-Sabkha Rd bus station, cross the road and head into Naif South St.

7 Naif Souq Follow Naif South St, turn right into 9A St and wander down until you arrive at **Naif Souq** (p58), a small covered market popular with Emirati women buying copy Dior *shay-las* and *abayas*, children's clothes and toys – it can get crazy here at night.

8 Afghan Kebab House If you've worked up an appetite rambling through Deira's souqs, a carnivorous meal at the **Afghan Kebab House** (p109), hidden behind Naif Mosque, will keep you sated for ages.

BUR DUBAI

Eating p110; Entertainment p125; Shopping p95; Sleeping p155

Bur Dubai is the oldest part of the city and presents visitors with a slice of life from the emirate's early days. There are several distinct districts within Bur Dubai. Shindagha, the area near the entrance to the tunnel, is quiet and relatively undeveloped. It's a great place for a stroll and a light meal by the Creek. The souq district is every bit as vibrant as its Deira counterpart and exploring 'Little India' in the surrounding streets can easily absorb a couple of hours of your time. A little further east along the Creek is Dubai's administrative district; an area dominated by government buildings and overseas consulates.

Moving inland from Bastakia and the souqs, there are three main districts, each with their own distinctive character. Mankhool compensates for its lack of sights with quirky nightlife and scores of great restaurants. Unfortunately, much of the district is consumed by a bland concrete jungle known rather optimistically as Golden Sands. On the other side of the BurJuman Mall is Karama, home to rundown apartment blocks housing mainly Filipino and Indian expat workers. It's well worth a wander – it has a real community feel to it, and there's great shopping (watch out for the fakes) and dozens of Indian, Pakistani and Filipino restaurants where you can eat like a king for under Dh20. Further south is the rather nondescript Oud Metha, although in among its malls, hotels and theme parks are a few well-hidden gems, such as the restaurant at the **Iranian Club** (p108) and the cutting-edge clothing store **Five Green** (p97).

DUBAI MUSEUM Map pp54–5

☎ 353 1862; Al-Fahidi St, opp Grand Mosque & Diwan; adult/child Dh3/1; 🕒 8.30am–8.30pm Sat–Thu, 3–9pm Fri

Some tourists mock the very notion of Dubai having a museum: 'Historical Dubai? What, they have exhibits about the year 1995?' But Dubai does have an interesting history, and this is a surprisingly nifty little museum. Rather than bewilder guests with unnecessary detail, this is an accessible and entertaining introduction to Dubai and its history, culture and traditions. The museum occupies the early-19th-century Al-Fahidi Fort, possibly the oldest building in Dubai, and once the seat of government and the residence of Dubai's rulers. Apart from a small fishing boat, a traditional weapons display and a *barasti* house with wind-tower (step under it and feel the difference it makes in summer), much of the air-conditioned museum is thankfully underground. There's an excellent (albeit somewhat dated) multimedia presentation covering the city's history and growth that gives a real understanding of how rapidly

top picks

BUR DUBAI

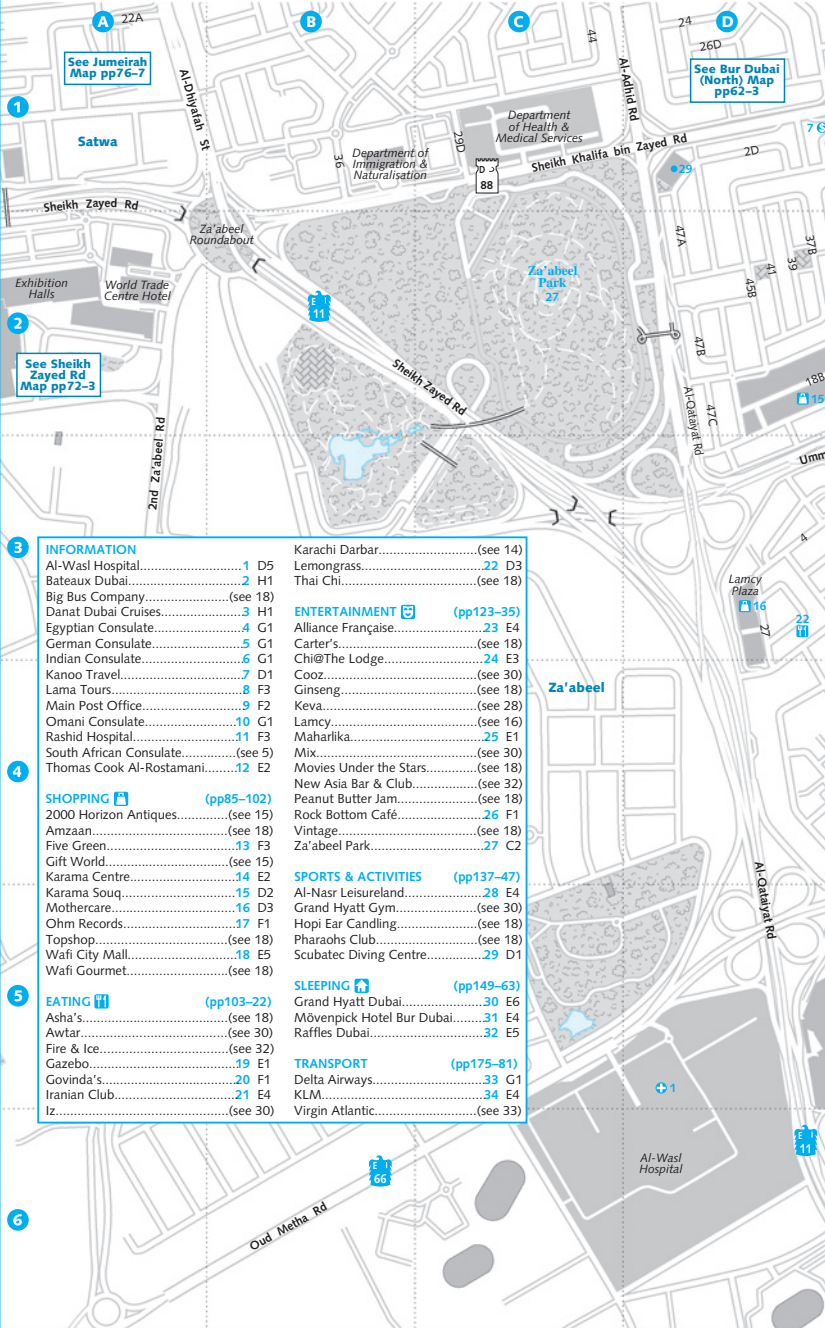
- **Dubai Museum** (above) Visit the museum for a speedy and entertaining introduction to the city.
- **Sheikh Saeed al-Maktoum House** (p66) Stroll through the elegantly restored house where there's a rare collection of amazing black-and-white photographs of early Dubai.
- **Bastakia Quarter** (right) Walk through Dubai's 'old town' and pop into **XVA** (p68) for a salad, a fruit juice and a peek at their latest exhibition.

Dubai has developed. Then there are a series of cutesy dioramas of old Dubai life, supported by video, sound effects and disturbingly lifelike mannequins. A highlight for many is the complete grave from the Al-Qusais archaeological site and finds from digs at Al-Qusais (dating back to 2500 to 500 BC) and Jumeirah (6th century AD). All displays in the museum have explanations in Arabic and English. Photography is not officially permitted, although many visitors find it impossible to resist posing with the mannequins for a sneaky snap or two...

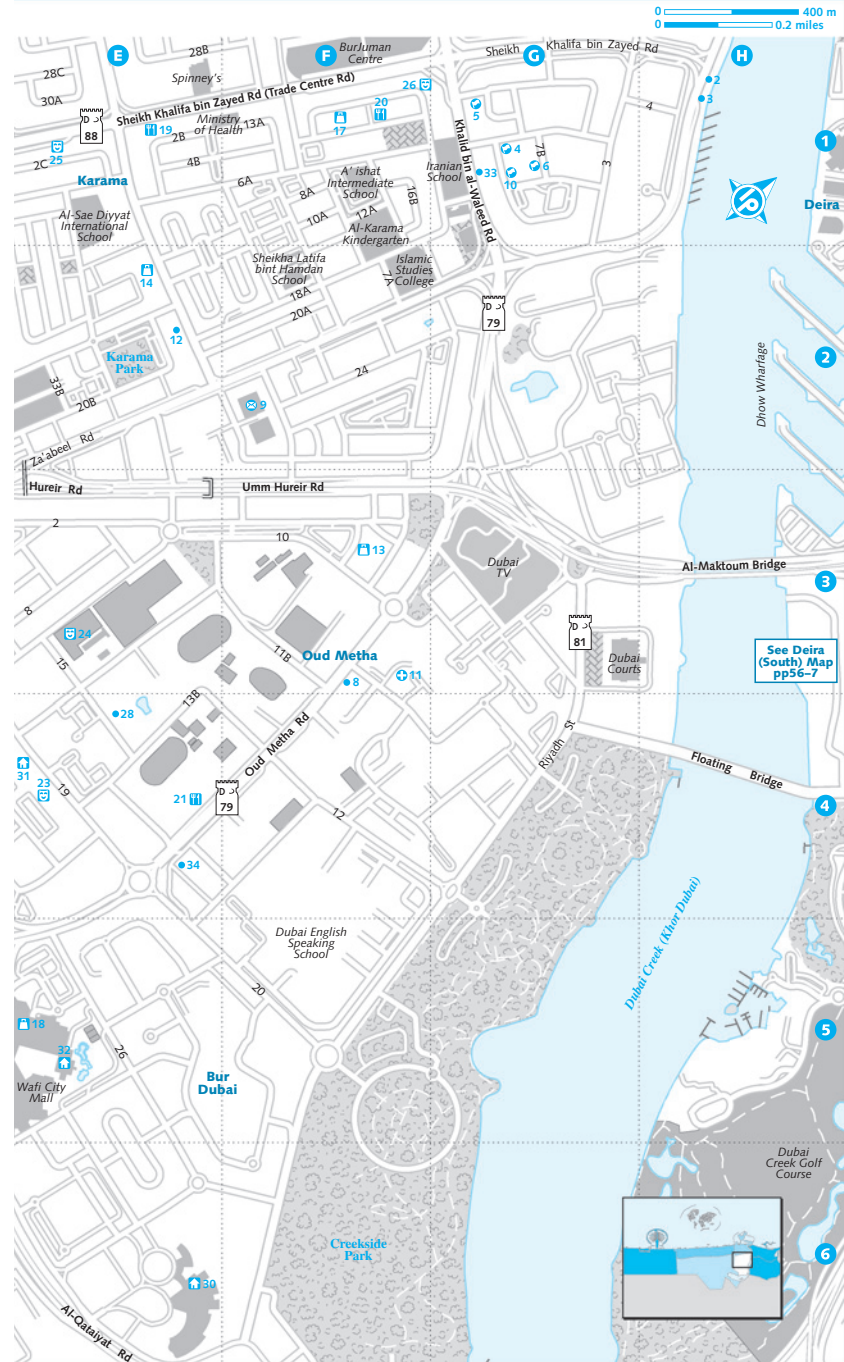
BASTAKIA QUARTER Map pp54–5

With its arty feel and narrow breezy lanes, the atmospheric old Bastakia Quarter on the waterfront east of the Bur Dubai Souq is a pleasant place to explore. Here you'll find the highest concentration of traditional old wind-tower houses in Dubai. Built at the beginning of the 20th century, these buildings were once the homes of wealthy pearl and textile merchants who came from Bastak in southern Iran, enticed to Dubai by its free trade. The elegant

BUR DUBAI (SOUTH)



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homes the traders built were the most sophisticated in Dubai, and were only found in coastal towns where there was enough wealth to build with coral, gypsum and limestone – a big step up from palm fronds. A typical house was two-storeys with a central courtyard, which most rooms opened onto, and which boasted decorative arches with intricate carvings. Generally fairly plain from the outside, they had the wonderful carved wooden doors you see today, plus crenulations, carved grilles and stucco panels on the wealthier merchants' homes – many of Bastakia's renovated buildings, such as **XVA** (p68), **Majlis Gallery** (p68) and **Basta Art Café** (p113), have these gorgeous decorations.

BUR DUBAI SOUQ Map pp54–5

Btwn Bur Dubai waterfront & Al-Fahidi St

While not as old as the Deira souqs – in the old days Bur Dubai and Bastakia residents had to take a boat across to Deira to go shopping – this breezy renovated souq can be just as atmospheric and lively a place to visit. On a summer's evening it can also be cooler, as the breeze blows through the wooden-latticed arcades. The buzziest time to visit is a Friday evening when it's crowded with expat workers shopping on their day off. While you'll find some great take-home items, what's primarily on offer are cheap clothes, shoes and textiles, mainly purchased by Emirati and Indian women. The surrounding backstreets – with its tailors, textile shops and sari shops – may not be as aesthetically pleasing to the eye, but are still intriguing and worth exploring.

SHEIKH SAEED AL-MAKTOUM HOUSE Map pp62–3

☎ 393 7139; Al-Shindagha Rd; adult/child Dh2/1; ☎ 8am–8.30pm Sat–Thu, 3–9.30pm Fri

Now a wonderful museum of pre-oil times, the grand courtyard house of Sheikh Saeed, the grandfather of Sheikh Mohammed, sits splendidly on the Shindagha area waterfront, near the Heritage and Diving Villages. Built in 1896, during the reign of Sheikh Maktoum bin Hasher al-Maktoum, it served for many years as the residence for the Al-Maktoum family, and Sheikh Saeed lived here from 1888 until his death in 1958. It houses an engaging exhibition of photographs, primarily from the 1940s, '50s and

'60s, taken on the Creek, in the souqs and at traditional celebrations. There are also displays of postage stamps and coins (one featuring Edward VII was known as *umm salaah*, meaning the 'bald headed one') and a model of Bur Dubai from the 1950s also helps tell the story.

SAHARY GATE Map pp62–3

☎ 353 5660; www.saharygate.com; Bastakia House no 14; ☎ 9am–6pm

The number of expats living and working in Dubai who have never had a single conversation with a UAE national is a cause for concern. Too many expatriates know very little about the culture of their hosts, and Emiratis aren't making enough of an effort to enlighten their guests. To help counter the stereotypes and misunderstandings that pervade Dubai society, Sahary Gate offers a range of workshops and tours that help educate foreigners about the local culture. Arabic calligraphy, cooking, language and jewellery-making are taught in workshops typically lasting between two and four hours, while some of the tours are refreshingly unique. You can visit the palace of a generous Ajman sheikh, who donates all proceeds to charity, or go to the house of a local family for coffee, dates and a light meal. The proceeds for these tours go to City of Hope, a shelter for abused women. Sahary House also runs regular cultural awareness classes and free talks about Islam. If you don't have enough time for a class or a tour, it's still worth popping in to enjoy the beautiful building and courtyard, and a coffee or two in the traditional *majlis*.

'HINDI LANE' Map pp62–3

Behind Grand Mosque, off Ali bin Abi Talib St

If you venture behind the Grand Mosque in Bur Dubai, you'll find evidence of two places of worship behind very modest exteriors – rows of shoes in shelves at the bottom of a couple of sets of stairs. One staircase leads to the **Shri Nathje Jayate Temple**, also known as the Krishna Mandir (*mandir* is Hindi for temple). Shri Nathji is the main deity of Pushtimarg, a Hindu devotional sect, with its main temple near Udaipur in Rajasthan, India. The other house of worship is identified by a discreet sign, **Sikh Gurudaba**, which is interesting, because a Sikh place of worship is called a *gurdwara*.

YEEHAH – IT'S FREE

While entrance fees to Dubai's official sights and museums are fairly inexpensive, for those on a tight budget, here are a few things you can do for free:

Dhow Wharfage (p58) It costs nothing to wander along the fascinating dhow wharfage, and if you're good at smiling and miming, you might even get invited to go onboard a boat for a look. (Unaccompanied women, of course, should refuse nicely.)

Waterfront on Friday The big day off for expats sees companies bussing workers from city-rim labour camps to the Shindagha waterfront, where they hang out with friends, play with gadgets in Carrefour for hours on end, take snapshots for the relatives back home and play long games of cricket.

Heritage House (p58) The underappreciated Heritage House boasts a charming central courtyard, kitschy dioramas and staff who'll serve you cups of tea and traditional food. What's not to love?

A *guru* is a teacher-guide, and a *dabar* is a cheap lunch stop, but we're not sure if there's a connection. Of most interest to travellers is the small alley that expats refer to as 'Hindi Lane'. Here vendors sell Hindu religious paraphernalia and offerings to take to the temples: baskets of fruit, garlands of flowers, gold-embossed holy images, sacred ash, sandalwood paste and packets of bindis, the little pendants Hindu women stick to their foreheads.

HERITAGE & DIVING VILLAGES

Map pp62–3

☎ 393 7151; Al-Shindagha Rd; ☎ 8am–10pm Sat–Thu, 8–11am & 4–10pm Fri

During the **Dubai Shopping Festival** (p88), the Heritage and Diving Villages bloom with burqa-clad Emirati women making hot *dosa* (flat, grilled bread made of flour and water), Bedu men offering short-haul camel rides to children, and unusual traditional activities such as rifle-throwing competitions. Unfortunately, for the rest of the year the villages are lifeless, devoid of both tourists and staff, with empty souqs and only a few dreary displays to keep visitors interested. The occasional performance of traditional music or dance takes place outside the shopping festival – it's worth calling in advance and making sure your visit coincides with an event.

GRAND MOSQUE Map pp62–3

Ali bin Abi Talib St, opposite Dubai Museum

This mosque, with the tallest minaret in town, might appear to be as old as the Dubai Museum, but it was actually built in the 1990s. The multi-domed mosque maintains the style of the original Grand Mosque, which dated from 1900 and was

knocked down to make way for another mosque in 1960. Its sand-coloured walls and wooden shutters blend in perfectly with the surrounding old quarter of Bur Dubai. As well as being the centre of Dubai's religious and cultural life, the original Grand Mosque was also home to the town's *kuttab* school where children learnt to recite the Quran from memory. Note that it's only possible to admire the mosque from outside – interiors of mosques in Dubai and the UAE are out of bounds to non-Muslims (except for the tour at Jumeirah Mosque; see p75).

CREEKSIDE PARK Map pp64–5

☎ 800 900 (Dubai Municipality); off Riyadh St, btwn Al-Garhoud & Al-Maktoum Bridges; admission Dh5; ☎ 8am–11pm Sat–Wed, 8am–11.30pm Thu–Fri & public holidays, women & children only Wed This lovely, lush waterfront park is one of the city's largest – running from Al-Garhoud Bridge to Al-Maktoum Bridge – and is one of the favourites. It's very peaceful and has gorgeous views across the Creek. It also offers children's play areas, *abra* rides and *dhow* cruises, kiosks, restaurants, an amphitheatre and beaches (though it's not advisable to swim). On weekends it's like a huge *sheesha* café, with families spread out on blankets, puffing away. There's also a 2.5km cable-car ride (tickets adult/child Dh25/15) 30m above the shore of the Creek, with fabulous vistas. Also situated in a colourful building in the park is **Children's City** (☎ 334 0808; www.childrencity.ae; adult/child Dh15/10; ☎ 9am–10pm Sat–Thu, 4–10pm Fri). Popular with local and expat kids, it's home to a creative, educational and entertaining kids' activities centre.

stopping and having a look at the Islamic Centre at Sheikh Obaid bin Thani House. If your visit to Dubai coincides with the Dubai Shopping Festival, the villages will be a hive of activity, providing an insight into Emirati traditions. There are occasional traditional

music or dance performances at other times of the year.

14 Kan Zaman Grab a waterfront table at [Kan Zaman](#) (p112) and relax, sit back and enjoy a tasty Arabic lunch.

SHEIKH ZAYED ROAD

Eating [p114](#); Entertainment [p125](#); Shopping [p98](#); Sleeping [p157](#)

Sheikh Zayed Rd itself, which connects Dubai to Abu Dhabi, has been around for many years. But the stretch of high-rise apartment blocks, five-star hotels and offices crammed into the space between the World Trade Centre (a 1979 building that looks prehistoric alongside its space-age cohorts) and the Dusit was mostly built in the late '90s. Just to the side of Dubai's favourite speedway, there's the growing district of Al-Quoz, home to innumerable industrial estates and, of greater interest to tourists, some of the Middle East's best art galleries.

DUBAI WILDLIFE & WATERBIRD SANCTUARY [Map p52](#)

☎ 223 2323; Oud Metha Rd, Ras al-Khor; admission free; 🕒 10am-4pm Sat-Thu, closed Fri

Pretty pink flamingos flock to the inland end of the Dubai Creek during the winter months. Also known as Al-Khor Nature Reserve, this sanctuary has platforms that allow visitors to get a close-up view of the birds (with fantastically sharp binoculars) without disturbing them, and the juxtaposition of these elegant birds with the Dubai metropolis is dramatic. Kids love it, and it's a decent outside bet for a quirky date too.

B21 GALLERY [Map pp72-3](#)

☎ 340 3965; off Sheikh Zayed Rd, btwn Interchanges 3 & 4, Al-Quoz; 🕒 11am-7pm Sat-Thu, closed Fri

In this warehouse space, Palestinian artist Jeffar Khaldi shows his own vibrant work, as well as rotating exhibitions of locally produced and regional art, such as Ramin Haerizadeh's distorted photography. It's worth a look if you're in this developing arts neighbourhood, but call first if you're not, as they could be in-between exhibitions.

THIRD LINE [Map pp72-3](#)

☎ 341 1367; [www.thethirdline.com](#); off Sheikh Zayed Rd, btwn Interchanges 3 & 4, Al-Quoz; 🕒 11am-8pm Sat-Thu, closed Fri

One of Dubai's more adventurous art spaces is operated by a couple of talented young curators, Sunny Rahbar and Claudia Cellini, whose exhibitions focus on provocative contemporary art. Their shows often include work that breaks the rules of traditional arts in the region to create fresh new forms, playfully appropriating everything from Pakistani miniatures and Persian calligraphy to traditional clothing. Recent exhibitions have included the arresting op art of Rana Begum and the elaborate paintings of Iranian artist Farhad Moshri.

MEEM GALLERY [Map pp72-3](#)

☎ 347 7883; [www.meem.ae](#); Umm Suqeim Rd, off Interchange 4, Al-Quoz; 🕒 9.30am-6.30pm Sat-Wed, closed Thu, 9.30am-2pm Fri

An ambitious venture by two Emirati business tycoons and British art dealer Charlie Pocock, Meem is dedicated to traditional and contemporary Islamic art. Recent exhibitions have included Ali Omar Ermes' calligraphic paintings and the pop art of Jordan's Jamal Abdul Rahim. If you're interested in learning more about Arabic art, this is a great place to visit and possibly make an acquisition.

COURTYARD [Map pp72-3](#)

☎ 347 5050; [www.courtyard-uae.com](#); off Sheikh Zayed Rd, btwn Interchanges 3 & 4, Al-Quoz; 🕒 9am-7pm Sat-Thu

The Courtyard is home to several galleries that hold changing exhibitions of painting, calligraphy, mixed media, miniatures, rare Persian carpets and sculptures by local, Middle Eastern and international artists. The Courtyard also has interior design and handicrafts stores, and a few media/design businesses. Highlights here are Iranian expat artist, Dariush Zandi's [Total Arts at The](#)

top picks

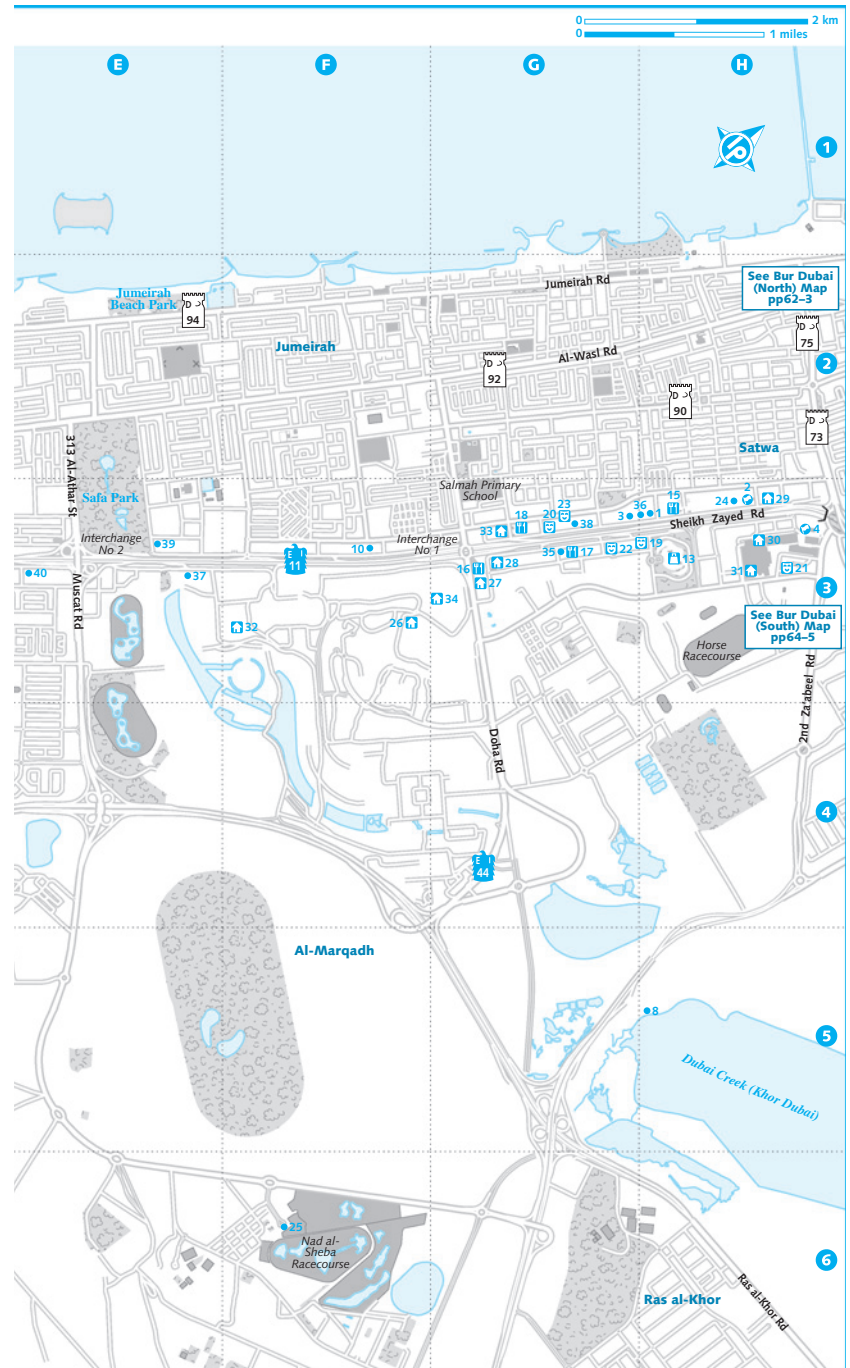
FOR KIDS

- Dubai Museum (p61)
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- Wild Wadi Waterpark (p78)
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SHEIKH ZAYED ROAD



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Courtyard (☎ 347 5050) and locally-owned **Courtyard Gallery & Café** (☎ 347 9090).

JAM JAR Map pp72–3

☎ 341 7303; www.thejamjardubai.com; off Sheikh Zayed Rd exit 39, near Dubai Garden Centre, Al-Barsha; ☎ 10am–9pm Sat, Mon–Thu, 2–9pm Fri
The Jam Jar is more than just another art gallery. It's a studio too, and if you're feeling the creative urge, you can hire an easel, a canvas and all the paint and paper you require to create your own masterpiece.

For those travelling with children, it's an appealing alternative to an afternoon in the mall.

ART SPACE Map pp72–3

☎ 332 5523; 9th fl, Fairmont Hotel, Sheikh Zayed Rd; ☎ 10am–8pm Sat–Thu
There's always something interesting to see at this refreshing commercial gallery with its focus on contemporary art and mission to promote local artists, develop an appreciation for art and grow the local scene.

JUMEIRAH

Eating p117; Entertainment p128; Shopping p99; Sleeping p159

Before you were able to own a private desert island in the shape of your favourite country, Jumeirah was the place where everybody went to realise their Dubai dreams. It's the emirate's answer to Bondi or Malibu, with excellent public beaches, boutique shopping, copious spas and health clubs, and a mix of Mercedes and expensive 4WDs in villa driveways. The far end of Jumeirah is home to some of Dubai's landmark buildings, including the Burj Al Arab and Madinat Jumeirah.

BURJ AL ARAB Map pp76–7

☎ 301 7777; www.burj-al-arab.com; Jumeirah Rd, Umm Suqeim

In its first decade since opening, the Burj Al Arab has been more than just the iconic symbol of a booming city in the sand; it has challenged preconceived ideas of what an Arab country in the Middle East can achieve. The Burj's statistics are certainly impressive. It is built on an artificial island 280m offshore from the Jumeirah Beach Hotel and the sail-shaped building tops out at 321m. These numbers, of course, have been dwarfed by the newer Burj in town, but this five-star hotel (it's best to ignore the nonsense about seven stars) is still worth visiting, if only to gawk at an interior that's every bit as gaudy as the exterior is gorgeous. If you're not staying at the hotel, you need a restaurant reservation to get past the security gates. The most wallet-friendly option is to visit the Skyview Bar (although the price of drinks will induce vertigo before you've even peered out the windows) or book an equally pricey afternoon tea at Sahn Eddar. The unthinkable alternative, however, is travelling all the way to Dubai and then leaving without going inside and forming an opinion on this extraordinary building.

JUMEIRAH MOSQUE Map pp76–7

☎ 353 6666; Jumeira Rd; tour Dh10; ☎ 10am Sat, Sun, Tue & Thu

The splendid, intricately detailed architecture (stunningly lit at night) and the opportunity to have a look inside (normally non-Muslims are not able to enter mosques here) makes Jumeirah Mosque well worth visiting. It is aimed at promoting greater understanding between Muslims and other religions and cultures; the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding's 'Open Doors, Open Minds' tour takes visitors through the building

describing the architecture of the mosque and introducing them to Islam plus the Emirati culture and traditions. The Q&A session is viewed as a vital part of the visit, so read up a little first (see the boxed text, p41). It's best to prebook, as it's becoming increasingly popular, and make sure to dress modestly (no shorts, cover back and arms, and women should wear a headscarf). You'll also need to remove your shoes before entering.

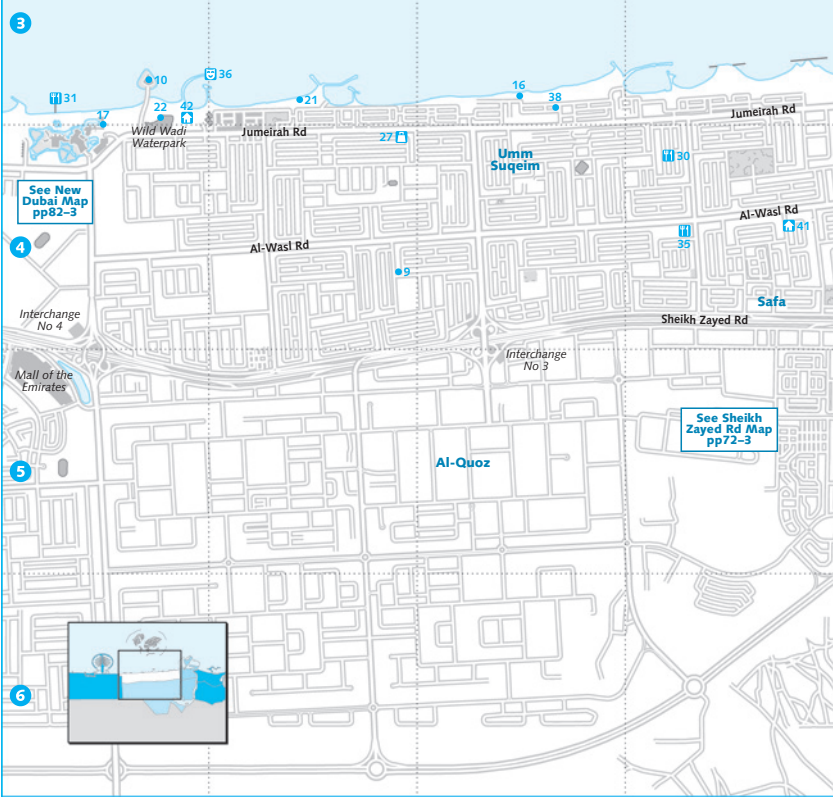
MADINAT JUMEIRAH Map pp76–7

Al-Sufouh Rd, Jumeirah

The Madinat is a hotel, shopping and entertainment complex that delights and frustrates in equal measures. For starters, it is quite a sight – its exteriors are inspired by the ancient skyscrapers found in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, and the interiors are influenced by old Arabian merchant houses. There are some exquisite details here, so if you see some stairs, take them – they might lead you to a secreted terrace and wind-tower, with a mesmerising vista of the sprawling complex. If you're a hotel guest, or have a restaurant reservation, you can catch the silent *abras* cruising along the Venetian-style canals from one location to the next. If you're a day tripper and non-diner, your progress will be cut short by staff patrolling the walkways to keep the riff-raff from the souq away from the hotels. More a themed shopping mall than a traditional Arabian market, the souq is a bit of a tourist trap. Prices are several times more expensive than they are in real souqs and with a few exceptions, such as **Pisces** (p118) and the **Noodle House** (p117), the restaurants overcharge for ordinary fare. The **Madinat Theatre** (www.madinattheatre.com) hosts musicals, plays, opera, ballet and festivals; and during the cooler winter months, a traditional oud player enchants the *sheesha*-smoking crowd in the souq's central plaza.

JUMEIRAH

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PUBLIC EXPOSURE

If you're not staying at a five star with access to some sand, and want to be able to say you've swum in the Arabian Sea (or at least dipped your toes in the water), you've got two options: either head to one of Dubai's free public beaches or pay for a day at a beach club.

Dipping Without Dirhams

Dubai's free beaches...

Russian Beach (Map pp76-7; next to Dubai Marine Beach Resort & Spa, Jumeirah) Also known as Open Beach, this is one of Dubai's few truly public spaces. As such, it reflects the multicultural nature of Dubai society and is a great place for a walk, especially on a Friday when most guest workers have the day off and take to picnicking, playing volleyball and splashing around in the ocean. We have reservations about recommending it as a destination for sunbathing. The city still struggles to deal with beach pests, packs of men who head to the beaches at the weekends to stare at and photograph women. Physical harassment is extremely rare, but it's probably worth spending a little extra money or waiting for a women-only day. Showers and kiosk are available.

Kite Beach (Map p52; behind old Wollongong University campus, Umm Suqeim 4) This long pristine beach is a great place to sunbathe, except for the kite surfers (hence the name), whose abilities range from good to good grief. No facilities.

Umm Suqeim Beach (Map p52; btwn Jumeirah Beach Hotel & Kite Beach) This white sandy beach, with fabulous views of the Burj, is popular with Jumeirah families and Western expatriates. Showers and shelter.

Beaches for Bucks

The ones that cost...

Jumeirah Beach Park (pp76-7; per person/car Dh5/20; ☎ 8am-11pm, women & children only Sat & Mon) It's a real treat to take a walk on the grass at this verdant park, as it's a couple of degrees cooler than the beach. Fronting onto a long stretch of Jumeirah Beach, the beach has lifeguards on duty, a children's play area, barbecues, picnic tables, walkways and kiosks.

Khor al-Mamzar (Map p52; per person/car Dh5/30; ☎ 8am-11pm; women & children only Wed) This calm inlet must be one of the prettiest spots to swim, although construction on the Palm Deira is becoming an increasing eyesore. Showers, picnicking facilities and tour groups galore.

One&Only Royal Mirage (p162) If you're not a guest, you have to win a mini-lottery to gain access to this groomed beach and pool with views of the Palm development (adult Dh175). You have to turn up on the day (they don't accept advance bookings) and hope that hotel occupancy is below 80%. Only couples are permitted – no children.

Hilton Dubai Jumeirah (p163) Parents love the non-stop organised kids' activities, water sports and comparatively low prices (adult/child weekdays Dh180/95, weekends Dh250/95).

Le Meridien Mina Seyahi (p163) This good beach and its great pools are popular with a more body-conscious clubbing set (Sunday to Thursday adult/child Dh150/75). The weekends are reserved for hotel guests and members.

WILD WADI WATERPARK

Map pp76-7
☎ 348 4444; www.wildwadi.com; Jumeirah Rd, Jumeirah; adult/child Dh180/150; ☎ 11am-6pm Nov-Feb, 11am-7pm Mar-May & Sep-Oct, 11am-9pm Jun-Aug

Wild Wadi seems to satisfy everyone's needs, with dozens of ingeniously interconnected rides based on the legend of Arabian adventurer Juha and his friend, Sinbad the sailor, who are shipwrecked on a lush lagoon, beyond which lies a magical oasis. There

are water-safety lessons for children, more sedate rides for young children and nervous adults, two Flowriders (artificial waves) and the truly terrifying near-freefall Jumeirah Sceirah (hold on to your trunks, lads). Many people settle in for a few hours; the body boards and tubes are free, and food and drinks are available via a clever debit card attached to your wrist. It's important to call ahead before you visit: if it isn't closed to men (occasional Thursday night is women-only), there's a remote chance Michael Jack-

son will book the entire joint to swim in a lycra bodysuit that only reveals his eyes and nose. Rumours are that some lifeguards on duty in 2005 suffered post-traumatic stress disorder after seeing such an event.

MAJLIS GHORFAT UM-AL-SHEEF

Map pp76-7

17 St, near Jumeirah Beach Park; admission Dh1; ☎ 8.30am-1.30pm & 3.30-8.30pm Sat-Thu, 3.30-8.30pm Fri

It is unusual to find a traditional building still standing so far from the Creek, but this one, south of Jumeirah Beach Park, has been well restored and is worth a visit. The two-storey structure was built in 1955 and was attended in the evenings by Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed al-Maktoum. Here he would listen to his people's complaints, grievances and ideas. The *majlis* also provided a cool retreat from the heat of the day because it is made of gypsum and coral rock, traditional building materials of the Gulf, and the roof is made of palm fronds (*areesh*). The *majlis* is decorated with cushions, rugs, a coffeepot, pottery and food platters, and is pretty close to the way it would have looked in Sheikh Rashid's day.

GREEN ART GALLERY

Map pp76-7
☎ 344 9888; www.gagallery.com; behind Dubai Zoo, Jumeirah; ☎ 9.30am-1.30pm & 4.30-9pm Sat-Thu

With regular temporary exhibitions and a growing permanent collection concentrating on the work of artists living in the UAE, this small, altruistic commercial gallery is committed to nurturing local talent and developing the art scene. It also helps educate artists about international art distribution and promotion, and the website features selections from upcoming and past exhibitions.

IRANIAN MOSQUE

Map pp76-7
Al-Wasl Rd, Satwa
Shiite mosques are noteworthy for their exquisite faience (green-and-blue-coloured and glazed) tile work covering the façade and main dome. A stunning Dubai example is the Iranian Mosque in Satwa – and the **Iranian Hospital**, adjacent and opposite, carries this same type of tile work.

JUMEIRAH ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

Map pp76-7
Off 27 St (look for a large fenced-in area) near Jumeirah Beach Park, Jumeirah
Only really of interest to archaeology buffs, this is one of the most significant and largest archaeological sites in the UAE, where items dating from the 6th century AD were found and can be seen at **Dubai Museum** (p61) and the **Heritage Village** (p67). Surrounded by atmosphere-inhibiting modern villas, the settlement is interesting in that it spans the

GET LOST: BUR DUBAI, SHEIKH ZAYED ROAD & JUMEIRAH

Al-Musallah (Map pp62-3) Most people walk down Al-Musallah Rd only to reach Bastakiya, but it's a shame not to explore the animated backstreets of this area. The roads behind Dubai Museum are the city's 'Little India', where you'll see lots of textile stores, cheap restaurants, hair salons (amusingly called 'saloons' in the Emirates), and men on the street watching cricket through the windows of cafeterias.

Karama (Map pp64-5) Wandering the gritty backstreets of the lower-income expat community in Karama is interesting, especially if you're sociable and chat to the affable shopkeepers. The district is best known for its *laissez-faire* attitude towards patents, copyrights and intellectual property – bootleg DVDs, handbags, football shirts and perfumes are widely available here. In most cases you get what you pay for. It's also fantastic for food, with dozens of restaurants serving the assorted cuisines of the Indian subcontinent. At many of the restaurants you can eat well and get change from a Dh20 note.

Satwa (Map pp72-3) In the space between the swanky skyscrapers of Sheikh Zayed Rd and the cosmopolitan swagger of Dubai's best street for eating, Al-Dhiyafa Rd, is this fascinating residential area. The villas here are so odd-looking, uneven and colourful (pink and yellow are popular choices) they look like they've been designed by kids in a classroom. It's quite common for 15 to 20 people to share a single villa; you'll see sofas and even beds on the roof and the road, such is the lack of space. The souq-like main thoroughfare, Satwa Rd, comes alive at night in a riotous blaze of neon. Unless you want a cheap haircut or a new set of keys, it's unlikely many of the shops will appeal, but it's definitely worth refuelling at **Ravi** (p119). Don't miss Al-Hudaiba Rd, known locally as 'Plant Street'. It's home to a few good florists, a great Filipino supermarket, a couple of excellent fruit and veg shops, and pet shop owners who should thank their lucky stars animal welfare is such a fringe concern in this city.

pre-Islamic and Islamic eras and was once a caravan stop on a route linking Ctesiphon (now Iraq) to northern Oman. Remains from here link it with the Persian Sassanid Empire, dominant in the region from the 3rd to 6th centuries AD, and the Umayyad dynasty in the 7th century, when Islam arrived in the Gulf.

1X1 ART SPACE Map p52

☎ 348 3873; www.1x1artspace.com; Villa 1023, Al-Mahara, Al-Wasl Rd; 🕒 11am-8pm Sat-Thu
Expats from the Indian subcontinent make up a huge chunk of Dubai's population, yet they're under-represented in the city's gal-

eries. 1x1 Art Space aims to redress the imbalance by exhibiting Indian and Pakistani contemporary art in its elegant gallery.

SAFA PARK Map pp76-7

Cnr Al-Wasl Rd & Al-Hadiqa St, Safa; admission Dh5; 🕒 8am-11pm, women & children only Tue
This very popular park stretches for 1km from Al-Wasl Rd to Sheikh Zayed Rd. Lots of cricket is played on the wide grassy expanses at weekends, and after dark the rides (near Al-Wasl Rd) get busy. There are tennis courts, a soccer pitch, barbecues, an artificial waterfall, and a lake where you can hire paddle boats.

NEW DUBAI

Eating [p119](#); Entertainment [p130](#); Shopping [p101](#); Sleeping [p162](#)

There's an expat fable about a couple who move into the penthouse suite of a high-rise Marina apartment with amazing views of the Burj Al Arab, the Palm Jumeirah and The World. Feeling smug about the postcard perfection of their dream life in the Emirates, they retire to bed. The following morning they wake up, pull back the curtains, and are devastated to discover a block of apartments entirely obscuring their view.

The couple should consider themselves lucky that only one building materialised from nothing overnight. New Dubai, as it's unimaginatively known, is thought to be the fastest-growing place on earth. The figures are mind-blowing. In a few years time, the combined population of the Palm Jumeirah, Palm Jebel Ali and Dubai Waterfront is expected to be over a million people (with a further million living on the Palm Deira). The Palm Jumeirah will be home to 30 luxury hotels, and the Dubai Waterfront alone will add 800km to the emirate's coastline. It's hard to keep up. In the previous edition of this book we didn't require a separate section for New Dubai. In the next edition we might have to add a further section: New New Dubai?

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

It's believed that a third of the world's cranes are in Dubai. Here are some of the more ambitious projects underway (for soon-to-open luxury hotels, see the boxed text, [p162](#)). You might just spot a theme developing...

Bawadi How's this for ambition? Bawadi will consist of 51 hotels and 60,000 hotel rooms, plus lots of shopping malls, theme parks and restaurants. No half-measures in this city.

Burj Al Alam One of countless skyscrapers in the Business Bay district, Alam is expected to become one of the 10 tallest buildings in the world upon completion.

Culture Village Whaddya mean Dubai has no culture? It's soon to have an entire satellite town dedicated to the clever stuff. Culture Village will feature academies, galleries, workshops, craft studios and, of course, luxury villas.

Dubailand Bawadi, Mall of Arabia, Dubai Sports City and plenty of other developments will all be part of Dubailand, which as far as we can tell, will be significantly bigger – and much more fun – than life itself.

Dubai Waterfront A series of manmade islands forming around the Palm Jebel Ali, Dubai Waterfront will eventually be home to around 400,000 people. It will be the largest manmade development in the world.

Dubai World Central International Airport The planet's biggest airport will also be home to its biggest car park. Now they're just showing off...

Great Dubai Wheel The 185m observation wheel will be – surprise – the biggest in the world. It will offer panoramic views of the city.

Falcon City of Wonders A theme park featuring replicas of the Eiffel Tower, the Taj Mahal and the Leaning Tower of Pisa, among others. Why go anywhere else?

Lyon-Dubai City The rebuilding of the French city of Lyon in the desert is perhaps the single most bonkers Dubai project so far, and there's been no shortage of competition.

Meydan A city-within-a-city dedicated to horse racing. For fans only.

55° Time Dubai The world's first rotating skyscraper to be powered by the sun. And why ever not?

Palm Deira This set of artificial islands, the concluding chapter of the Palm trilogy, will be 10 times larger than the Palm Jumeirah and home to approximately a million people by 2020.

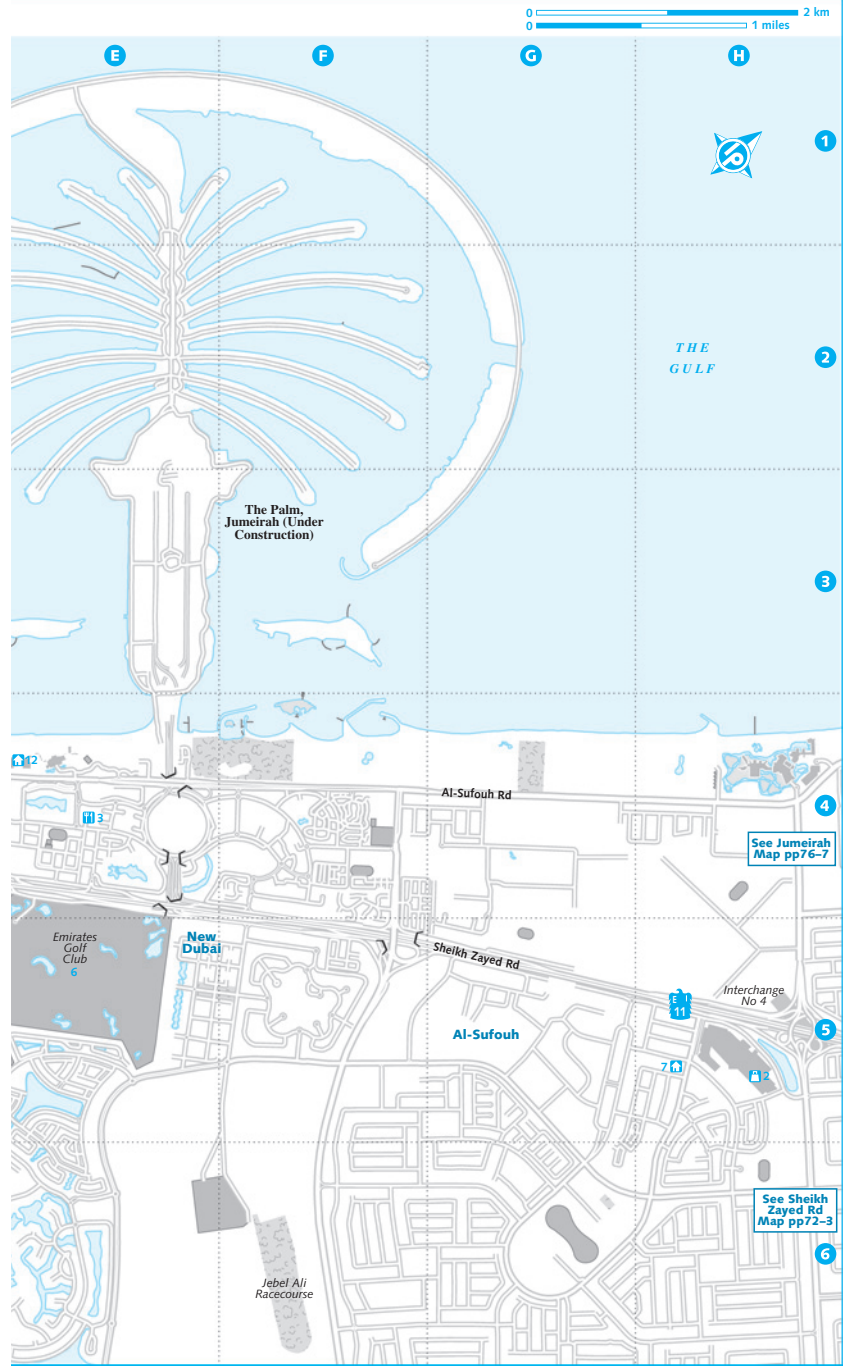
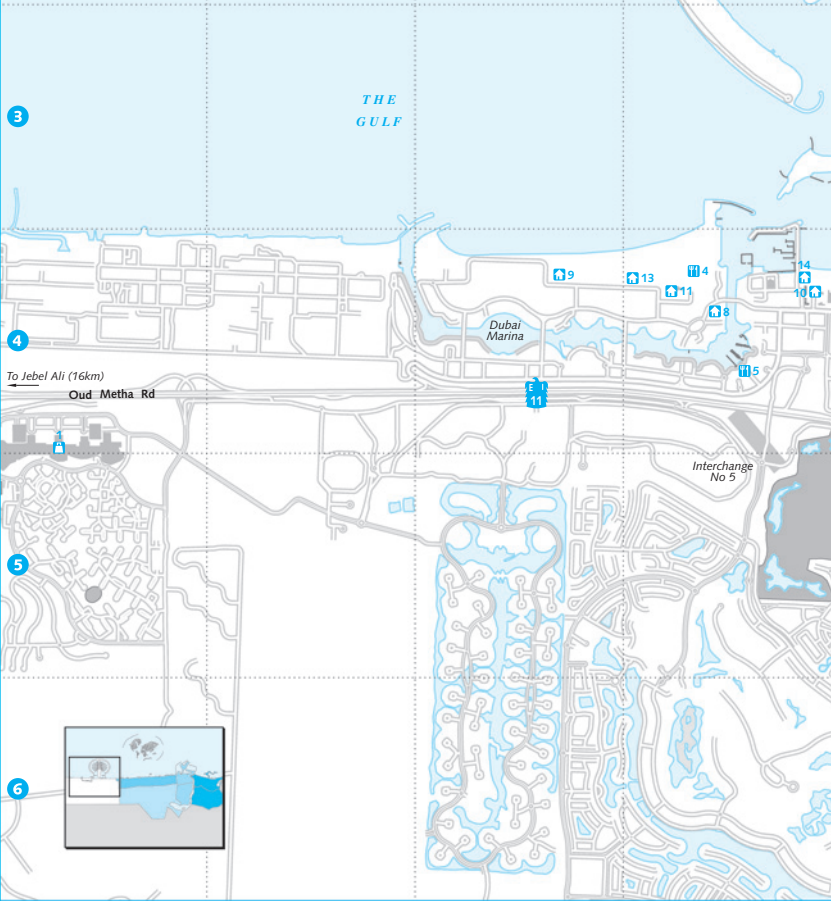
Palm Jebel Ali Expected to burst into life some time around 2010, the second Palm, when seen from above, spells out a verse of poetry written by Sheikh Mohammed: 'Take wisdom from the wise. Not everybody who rides a horse is a jockey. It takes a man of great vision to write on water. Great men rise to great challenges.'

Pentominium The world's tallest residential building has been saddled with one of the world's worst building names. It'll tower over the rest of Dubai Marina.

The Universe Here's how you trump The World. Islands built in the shape of the sun, the moon and the planet of the solar system will fill the gap between the Palm Deira and the Palm Jumeirah. But where do they go from here?

NEW DUBAI

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Even Newer Dubai? Or perhaps today's New Dubai becomes Middle-Aged Dubai. We'll work something out...

There's no sightseeing in the traditional sense here. There are no museums or historical sights, but there will soon be dozens of hotels and shopping malls, hundreds of restaurants and bars, long sandy beaches and some of the most extraordinary constructions ever made by man.

DUBAI COMMUNITY THEATRE & ARTS CENTRE

☎ 341 4777; www.ductac.org; 2nd fl, Mall of the Emirates, entrance from Ski Dubai car park;

🕒 9am-10pm Sat-Thu, 2-10pm Fri

With a 543-seat theatre and studio theatre, art gallery, rehearsal rooms and pottery

workshop, DUCTAC, as it's known, is the best-equipped arts centre in the country. As well as arts classes for residents, it puts on a diverse range of productions ranging from the memorable (Henry Rollins) to those we would rather forget (Flying Superkids).

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