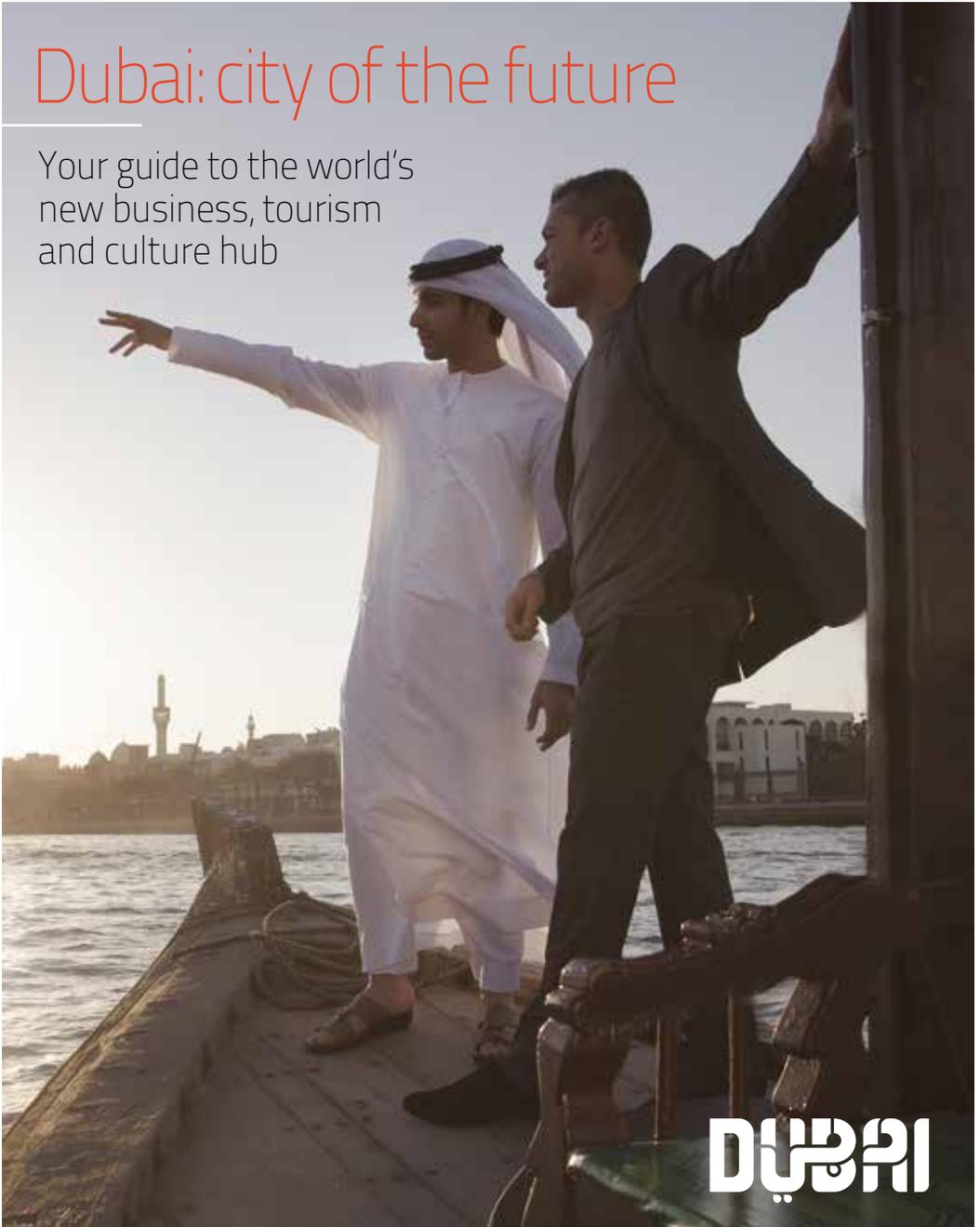


Director

Dubai: city of the future

Your guide to the world's
new business, tourism
and culture hub



دبي

Welcome



Dubai has come a long way – from a little-known desert entrepôt on the Arabian Gulf to a thriving metropolis that has captured the world’s imagination. From a business events perspective, we are witnessing exciting times as we gear up to host the World Expo in 2020. And by continuing to offer remarkable experiences, we are confident of realising our Tourism Vision 2020 objective of attracting 20 million annual visitors to Dubai by that date. By continuously working together with public and private-sector partners, we have moved from strength to strength in bringing an ever-expanding and exciting range of business events to the emirate. We look forward to welcoming you to Dubai!

Hamad M Bin Mejren, executive director, Dubai Events and Convention Bureau, a division of the Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM)



City of dreams: clockwise from top, Sheikh Zayed Road; a foodie's paradise; Arabic tent; surfing at the beach; Dubai's skyline; and horse racing



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“Dubai has succeeded in becoming an extremely strong regional business hub – a place SMEs want to operate in”



Banking on Dubai: top, the International Financial Centre and, right, the 15-storey The Gate building, surrounded by the Gate Precinct



The premier business destination

With its strong infrastructure and great location, Dubai has so much to offer

It's poised between east and west. With its bustling souks, sweeping desert surrounds and towering skyline, the city offers an enchanting setting for corporate gatherings or events. It is cosmopolitan and dynamic, and its transport, accommodation and logistics services are developing so fast it's hard for the casual observer to keep up.

“Dubai is the number one business events destination in the region,” says Steen Jakobsen, director of Dubai Business Events – the official convention bureau and a division of the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing. “We're not only home to the biggest exhibitions that exist in the region, but also the highest number of international association meetings. Of the world's Fortune 500 companies, 56 already have a presence here.”

Multinationals operating in Dubai include Microsoft, Pepsi and FedEx. But as Jakobsen points out, thanks to the city's radical development, it has also become a draw to smaller

entities too. “Over the last 15 years, Dubai has succeeded in becoming an extremely strong regional business hub, and the number of SMEs here clearly indicates this is a place they want to operate in,” he says.

CITY OF THE FUTURE

Dubai's capacity as a business destination was showcased to great effect in April when the city hosted 14,500 Chinese delegates from marketing company Nu Skin. The figures speak for themselves: 73 chartered flights into the city; an estimated impact on the local economy of £50m; 409 tailored itineraries created; 32,304 hours spent by caterers handling 31 tonnes of food. “The Chinese visitors are very pleased with the shopping experiences, the diversity of hotels, and the experiences around the city,” says Helal Al Marri, director general of Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing. “We have received great feedback, and social media coverage.”

No sooner had the dust settled than preparation began for an even bigger

event: in November 2013, the United Arab Emirates won the right to host the World Expo in Dubai in 2020, meaning this six-month-long global mega-event will be staged in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia (Menasa) region for the first time ever. “We're expecting 25 million people to visit for it,” says Al Marri. “We are not just designing our infrastructure, our hotel rooms or our venues for the Expo itself: we are also designing them for its legacy afterwards.”

According to Jakobsen, the Expo represents Dubai's opportunity to develop the city's broader tourism strategy. “At the moment, tourism accounts for 20 per cent of GDP,” he says, “and of that contribution, business tourism accounts for about 20 per cent. We have close to two million visitors who come annually to Dubai to take part in some sort of business activity. We plan to grow that number to three to four million by 2020. Our vision is to become the premier business events destination of the world.”



Towering: the Burj Khalifa – the world’s tallest building – dominates the skyline of downtown Dubai. Below: a futuristic shopping mall and a spice souk

“Dubai is well located for the growth markets of the future”



Gateway to emerging markets

Dubai makes it easier to expand into the world’s major emerging economies

One third of the world population lives within four hours’ flying distance from Dubai. Seventy per cent live within eight hours. In fact, if any one city can stake a claim to being at the centre of the world, it’s this one. It’s no surprise that Dubai’s population is such a melting pot, with current figures estimating that nationals account for less than 20 per cent of those living in the city, with the rest consisting of expats from all over the world.

If the city has typically been considered a gateway to the Middle East for business operations, it’s now set to become so much more, thanks to its position between many of the world’s major emerging markets. “The proximity to India, Africa and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries makes Dubai strategically well located to some of those growth markets of the future,” says Steen Jakobsen, director of Dubai Business Events – the official convention bureau and a division of the Department

of Tourism and Commerce Marketing. “Dubai will be able to accommodate a broader group of business events: both incentive groups looking for high-end products and also association meetings, where the budget is lower and attendees are travelling on a budget. It’s part of our strategy to cater for all levels of the market.”

A Dubai Association Centre has been set up to make it easier for non-profit entities to expand into the Middle East, Africa and India. “We aspire to be an association hub just like the ones we see in the US, Europe and Asia,” says Jakobsen. “We hope to establish Dubai and the UAE as a business hub, knowledge hub, and a meetings and conference hub.”

VITAL TRADE LINK

Testimony to the importance of Dubai’s position among several emerging markets is the extent to which the national carrier has prepared for the scenario Jakobsen describes. Formed in 1985 with two aircraft and three destinations, less than two

decades on Emirates has 230 aircraft and 143 destinations. Ten of these are in India, with 185 flights per week heading to that country and plans in place to grow operations.

It also plans to expand the network in Africa by over 40 per cent. “In the past five years, Emirates carried over 1.6 million passengers and 40,000 tonnes of cargo between Africa and China, underscoring the vital trade link that the continent has with the east,” says Sir Tim Clark, president of Emirates. “By 2020, Emirates expects to provide an additional 8.5 million seats to its African capacity.”

Having expanded its network in 2014 to include Oslo, Brussels, and Budapest, and with its eye on several more US cities, Emirates is targeting 70 million passengers a year by 2020, up from today’s 40 million. So it’s not surprising that there is a £20bn investment plan to revamp Al Maktoum International Airport’s handling capacity from five million passengers per year to around 120m by 2022.

A getaway like no other

Dubai has attractions for everyone, from thrill-seekers to foodies and fashionistas

Dubai is the fifth most visited city in the world, according to a report by MasterCard. “We think of ourselves as a year-round destination that attracts a diverse group of people, from families to couples to businessmen,” says Helal Al Marri, director general of Dubai’s Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing. “It distinguishes itself through its diversity – there are few places in the world where you can have so many varied experiences, from the beach and sea through to world-class shopping, desert experiences, water parks, kids’ attractions plus old souks, history and heritage.”

Thanks largely to the sophisticated nature of the city and excellent quality and service, the culinary scene in Dubai is second to none, with Gordon Ramsay, Pierre Gagnaire, Richard Sandoval and Nobu Matsuhisa all being among those to have set up ventures here. It’s agonising to attempt to pick out the highlights of the city’s eateries, but Argentinian steakhouse Asado,

At.mosphere (on the 122nd floor of the Burj Khalifa) and the Cielo Tapas Bar and Sky Lounge at Dubai Creek Yacht Club would all be contenders.

PERFECT CHOICE

The hotel scene is typically eclectic. Atlantis, on the fringe of the man-made archipelago Palm Jumeirah, offers an ideal setting for water-lovers, with its ‘Aquaventure’ park, underground-cavern aquarium and private beachfront. Meanwhile, those who prefer to be based downtown and appreciate a slick, brooding design ethos should make a beeline for the Armani. And the sail-shaped Burj Al Arab Jumeirah is the place to be if palatial luxury is your first priority.

Whichever you choose, it’ll be difficult to leave your accommodation behind – until you see how much there is on offer to do outside of its confines. The Desert Safari – which includes dune-bashing, BBQ dinners, belly dancing and camel rides – is hugely popular, as is Ski Dubai, a set of indoor pistes found within the Mall of the Emirates. As well as a break from the

desert heat, this quirky attraction offers tourists an 85 metre-high indoor mountain with five slopes of varying steepness, comprising 22,500 sq m of indoor skiing area.

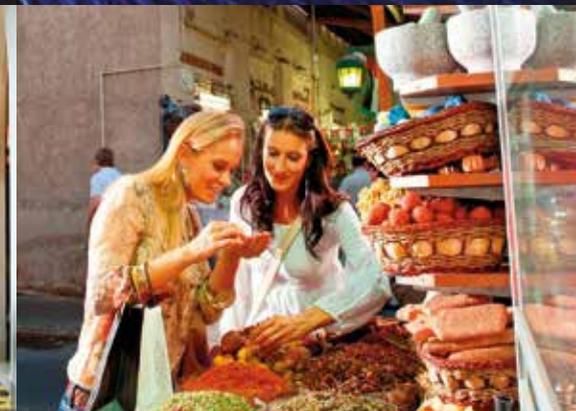
Needless to say, Dubai’s repertoire of attractions is set to expand. In 2015, IMG Worlds of Adventure – in which visitors will find an exhilarating range of rollercoasters, rides, thrills and adventures – will fling open its doors. Also next year, the Dubai Safari project will open up 400 hectares of attractions to the public including African, Asian and Arabian villages, a children’s zoo, a butterfly park and a botanical garden. An adventure rope course (Wire World), the 120,000 sq m Deira Fish Market, a 2,000-seat Opera House and Mall of the World – the world’s first temperature-controlled pedestrian city, covering a total area of 48 million sq ft – are also in rapid development.

“What keeps people coming back time and time again is the fact that Dubai is forever forward-looking and forever changing,” says Al Marri.



“There are few places in the world where you can have so many varied experiences”

Clockwise from main picture: Dubai Aquarium; shopping for spices; deluxe dining; the Wild Wadi Water Park; Dubai’s skyline at night; and crossing desert dunes





“Dubai’s hi-tech connectivity and level of efficiency are going to reach even dizzy heights in the coming years”



Well-connected: clockwise from top, the fully automated Dubai Metro; the terminal at Dubai International Airport; the airport’s interior; the Emirates Towers building complex



Living for the city

The world’s fifth-most visited city is fast becoming a fully networked, hi-tech marvel

Dubai attracts around 12 million visitors a year, and boasts nearly 90,000 hotel rooms across more than 630 properties. It’s home to the tallest building in the world – the 829.8m-tall Burj Khalifa. And with its 47-mile-long, fully automated Metro system, world-class airports, and state-of-the-art IT network, it’s perhaps the most hyper-connected city on Earth.

So it’s astonishing to think that this towering metropolis is still in its infancy. In 2012, a target was put forward to raise the number of annual tourists to 20 million by 2020, in the process tripling the economic impact: an ambitious goal but an achievable one (this is a city in which missing targets and deadlines isn’t an option).

And, measures are already in place to ensure the city’s infrastructure will become increasingly sophisticated in order to cope with these rising numbers. In March 2014 Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, vice-president and prime minister of the UAE, announced a new Smart City strategy which

will see Dubai’s hi-tech connectivity and efficiency reach even dizzy heights in the coming years. “There are approximately 100 government initiatives in the pipeline that will focus on six key pillars,” says Steen Jakobsen, director of Dubai Business Events – the official convention bureau and a division of the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing. “Transport, communications, infrastructure, electricity, economic services and urban planning – all of which are set to become ‘smart’.”

A HI-TECH METROPOLIS

High-speed WiFi access is being planned in all public spaces – from parks to buses to taxis – and smart sensors are being installed throughout the city. “In human terms, it will be technology that guides you to a free parking space simply by tapping an app on your phone,” says Jakobsen. “The sensors would relay information on transport schedules and traffic hotspots so you can plan your journey.” It will also give residents the

chance to pay bills and request services around the clock, at the touch of a screen.

Dubai’s Roads and Transport Authority (RTA), meanwhile, is introducing a live traffic monitoring system so residents can plan journeys before even leaving home. And, talking of transport, the Dubai Canal Project will see Dubai Creek extend from Business Bay, across the Sheikh Zayed Road, Al Safa Park, Al Wasl Road and Jumeirah Beach Road, where it will return to its original source – the ocean. With a private marina and new trade centre at its entrance, and with a shopping centre, four hotels, 450 restaurants and cycling paths in the planning, it promises to be a tourist attraction as well as a major boon to the city’s already advanced transport system.

Dubai Tram has also made exploring the city even easier. Operating every six minutes, trams run from Dubai Marina to Al Sufouh in 42 minutes.

The remarkable journey of this metropolis, a quiet fishing village 40 years ago, has clearly just begun.

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Dubai 2015: eight top events

Congress of the International Academy of Legal Medicine

19 - 21 January

Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre

Arab Health Exhibitions and Congress

26 - 29 January

Dubai World Trade Centre

7th International Conference on Drug Discovery and Therapy

9 - 12 February

Higher Colleges of Technology, Dubai Women's College

4th Biotechnology World Congress

9 - 12 February

Higher Colleges of Technology, Dubai Women's College

2nd International Conference and Exhibition on Rhinology and Otolaryngology

2 - 4 March

OMICS Group

Dubai International Humanitarian Aid and Development Conference Exhibition (DIHAD)

24 - 26 March

Dubai World Trade Centre

The International Family Medicine Conference and Exhibition

25 - 27 March

Dubai World Trade Centre

Worldwide Chinese Life Insurance Congress

22 - 25 August

Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre

For more information, visit www.dubaibusinessesvents.ae



DUBAI