

STREET EATS

Innovative
food with
flair

DINE IN THE DESERT

Dinner among
the dunes

AL FRESCO

Memorable
meals with a
view

MY DUBAI

Five of Australia's
best chefs share their
Dubai foodie hot-spots

MARKETS

Savouring
spices at the
souk

Flavours of Dubai



Travel

دبي



Fresh food from one of Dubai's traditional vendors

Editor's Letter

Feast your eyes on this *Flavours of Dubai* special *Luxury Travel* mini-magazine, produced on behalf of Dubai Tourism. A guide to the diverse, rich and broad array of culinary highlights in the Emirate of Dubai, we've covered everything to excite your sense of taste. With some 200-plus nationalities now calling Dubai home, the eclectic food scene here makes this destination a gastronomic must-do for all foodies.

Dubai hosts some impressive food events and festivals too each year including the Dubai Food Festival each February and March; and the Taste of Dubai event in March. Five of Australia's top chefs, including Shannon Bennett, George Calombaris, Manu Feildel, Matt Moran and Gary Mehigan attended the 2016 Dubai Food Festival – and here we share with you their top food picks and gourmet standouts from their time spent exploring Dubai.

In this guide, you'll see that the best food to be savoured in Dubai comes from not only the fine-dining restaurants tended by some of the world's most highly regarded chefs; but also from the colourful spice, fish and vegetable markets; the casual though refined beach clubs; the Bedouin camps and exotic dune-dining experiences in the desert; to the funky food trucks and independently-owned cafés where Dubai's hipsters contribute to the city's own thriving coffee culture. To really peel back the layers on traditional Emirati cuisine, foodies can also adventure around town with a number of curated culinary tours, sampling Dubai's melting pot of flavours.

Food enthusiasts will find flavours to inspire in Dubai's numerous culinary temptations. Enjoy.

KATRINA HOLDEN
EDITOR



Chor Muang (purple flower chicken dumplings) at Pai Thai restaurant, Madinat Jumeirah



Hakkasan at Jumeirah Emirates Towers

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DISPATCHES

THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF DUBAI'S LUXURY HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS.



NEW BURJ CLUB BEACH CHIC ON THE NORTH DECK

The Burj Al Arab hotel is launching a new luxury addition in Dubai, The Burj North Deck in Jumeirah. Along with its 32 beach cabanas and 400 sun loungers, there will be nine world class restaurants, including Al Muntaha, a Gascon-inspired cuisine with head chef, Pascal Aussignac of Michelin-starred Club Gascon. The development is being created in Finland and shipped to Dubai. It will incorporate state-of-the-art marine technology and design. The private luxury deck will jut out 100 metres into the Arabian Gulf. It's due to open in the second quarter of 2016. jumeirah.com

ITALIAN CUISINE LA DOLCE VITA IN DUBAI

Originating in Florence, Italy, The Artisan by Enoteca Pinchiorri has arrived in Dubai. With the aim to introduce *La Dolce Vita* (the sweet life) to Dubai, the restaurant offers traditional recipes with an experimental twist. Managing partner of The Artisan, Firas Fawaz, has focused on bringing the authentic flavours and style of Italy to Dubai with crockery, cutlery, fresh-produce and decorations all Italian-made, along with a home-grown regional wine selection. The kitchen is overseen by head chef Luca Tresoldi who has worked at the Enoteca Pinchiorri in Florence, a Relais & Châteaux restaurant, for the past five years. theartisan.ae



FOOD AND MYSTERY READING BETWEEN THE MENU LINES

Within the Palazzo Versace Hotel, Enigma is introducing an entirely new dining concept, called the Untold Story, which tells a narrative over the course of one year using four chefs and four entirely different menus. The chefs are drawn from some of the world's top restaurants and each of their cuisines are inspired by memories and experienced by diners through their multiple senses. Guests can pre-book their seats but menus are kept confidential until diners are in the restaurant. palazzoversace.ae



FRENCH CUISINE A NEW EXPERIENCE OF AN OLD CLASSIC

In Dubai's first-ever integrated urban-resort, the newly opened St. Regis Hotel, is the Brasserie Quartier, a French-themed restaurant with a modern twist. The menu is compiled of diverse dishes from different regions around France, including hand-cut steak tartare, baked escargot, grilled octopus, grilled veal paillard, and its signature raspberry croissant filled with raspberry purée. stregisdubai.com

NEW OPENING RENOWNED CHEF DUO MOVES INTO DUBAI

The second phase of Citywalk, an outdoor shopping and dining destination in Dubai, has been revealed, with 30 new shops and restaurants. Among the new openings are restaurants by the Galvin Brothers, Jeff and Chris Galvin, a duo of London chefs highly regarded for their Demoiselle Cafe in Harrods. They are bringing the concept of this cafe to Dubai as an unlicensed bakery and patisserie. Additionally, a Galvin Brother's licensed restaurant and lounge with a bar and club will be located on the top floor within a hotel in Citywalk. citywalk.ae



FOOD AND ENTERTAINMENT BEACH CLUB LIFESTYLE

Nikki Beach, already in a number of international luxury global hotels, has now opened on the beachfront of Dubai. The Nikki Beach Club concept is known for its music, fashion, art and dining experiences. The club cuisine includes delicacies from a number of its locations around the world. With its waterfront views of the Persian Gulf, guests can relax by the oversized pool and swim-up bar; plus enjoy food from its restaurants and bars including Cafe Nikki Dubai, Satine Restaurant & Lounge, Key West or Soul Lobby. nikkistyle.com

Dinner setting at STAY
by Yannick Alléno at
the One&Only The Palm

FLAVOURS OF DUBAI
FINE DINING

Dubai's gastronomic best

DUBAI AND ITS CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED AND INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED
CHEFS DISH UP A DAZZLING ARRAY OF WORLD-CLASS CUISINE.



Hakkasan



Tuna Tataki at Zuma



Junoon



Lamb rack at Social by Heinz Beck



Fine dining at Coya

Home to over 200 nationalities, Dubai's cultural diversity is reflected in its fine dining scene – from exquisite Peruvian and flawless French to contemporary Japanese and inventive Indian. And with world-renowned chefs flocking to open new restaurants in the city, visiting gourmands are in for treat.

One of the most exciting new arrivals is **Enigma** at the Palazzo Versace Dubai. It flies in a different celebrity chef every three months – all gleaned from the World's 50 Best Restaurant list – with the menu kept secret until you sit down. Quique Dacosta, whose eponymous restaurant in Spain holds three Michelin stars, was a recent guest chef.

In a city not short of excellent steakhouses – **The Rib Room** at Jumeirah Emirates Towers and **Ruth's Chris Steak House** at The Address Dubai Marina are firm favourites – **J&G Steakhouse** at the new St. Regis Dubai has made a big impression. On the menu are steakhouse classics, including dishes inspired by celebrity chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten – the soy-glazed short ribs are to die for.

Michelin-starred British chef Jason Atherton, meanwhile, has made his Dubai debut with **Marina Social** at InterContinental Dubai Marina. Serving a British-Mediterranean menu of tapas-style dishes in relaxed yet stylish surrounds, it has a top wine list too with over 1000 bins. Another chef to embrace a less formal style of fine dining is three Michelin-starred chef Heinz Beck; the Mediterranean dishes at **Social by Heinz Beck** at the Waldorf Astoria Palm Jumeirah are, nevertheless, perfectly executed. **La Petite Maison**, a world-renowned Provençal-inspired bistro in Dubai International Finance Centre (DIFC), is also known for its convivial setting and outstanding food, as is French-Mediterranean favourite **La Serre** in Vida Downtown Hotel.

If starched white tablecloths are more your style, **Refflets par Pierre Gagnaire** at InterContinental Dubai Festival City remains the city's finest French restaurant, with Gagnaire's three Michelin-starred molecular reputation evident in menu and service. Equally impressive is the offering from his thrice-starred compatriot, Yannick Alléno, at **STAY by Yannick**

TOP 5 FOOD HOTELS

Atlantis, The Palm

The iconic hotel has 23 restaurants from some of the world's best chefs, including Nobu Matsuhisa, Giorgio Locatelli and Gordon Ramsay.

Grosvenor House Dubai

This glitzy hotel boasts a handful of fine dining gems including original celebrity chef, Gary Rhodes', Rhodes W1 and award-winning, Toro Toro.

Jumeirah Emirates Towers

The twin towers are home to a dozen top restaurants including Hakkasan, The Ivy and Alta Badia.

Madinat Jumeirah

Comprising luxurious hotels linked by waterways, the Arabian-inspired resort has more than 40 restaurants and bars.

JW Marriott Marquis

The world's tallest hotel has more than a dozen restaurants and bars, including Tong Thai and Garden; plus modern Indian at Rang Mahal by Atul Kochhar.



Sushi and robata at Zuma



Nobu



Betroot salad at Coya



Private dining booth at Rang Mahal by Atul Kochhar

Alléno at One&Only The Palm. Try the signature Extractions Pairing menu – the chef spent four years perfecting the technique that results in incredibly intense flavours. Meanwhile, old-school Italian glamour rules at **Cipriani Dubai**, which has recently opened its chic doors in DIFC. The menu includes Cipriani classics such as Carpaccio alla Cipriani and the signature Bellini.

Asian is another cuisine that the city excels at. Known across the world for its expertly crafted dim sum, **Hakkasan** at Jumeirah Emirates Towers also boasts one of the city’s best wine lists, curated by head sommelier Olivier Gasselín. Coming in at number 88 in Restaurant Magazine’s 2015 list of the World’s Best restaurants, **Zuma** in DIFC does contemporary Japanese izakaya-style sharing plates like no other, while the Asian-inspired sharing plates at **Novikov** – laden with truffle and foie gras – are as opulent as the décor (be sure to peruse the seafood counter overflowing with interesting delicacies like Portuguese goose barnacles). A hit in Moscow and London, the new Asian fusion restaurant at Sheraton Grand Hotel is already popular with Dubai’s jet-set crowd.

Staying with the fusion theme, **Nobu** at Atlantis, The Palm serves chef Nobu Matsuhisa’s signature Japanese dishes with a Peruvian twist. The sleek dining room is impressive but when the weather is balmy, be sure to book a table in the garden. Of course, Peruvian cuisine has

exploded in cosmopolitan cities around the world and Dubai is no exception. **Coya** at Four Seasons Resort Dubai, the Middle East outpost of the celebrated London restaurant, serves sublime ceviches and tender *anticuchos* (barbecue skewers of meat) in one of the city’s most stunning dining rooms.

Dubai is home to plenty of excellent seafood restaurants including two spectacular spots with floor-to-ceiling aquariums where the sea life swims right past your table. You’ll need deep pockets to dine at **Al Mahara** at Burj Al Arab or **Ossiano** at Atlantis, The Palm but the ‘underwater’ experience and exceptional seafood are definitely worth it. Meanwhile, the vibe at **Catch** at Fairmont Dubai is more edgy and industrial – a nod to its original location in New York’s Meatpacking District – but the Asian-influenced seafood dishes are designed for sharing.

With Indians and Pakistanis making up Dubai’s largest expat population, it’s little wonder that exceptional South Asian cuisine abounds. A Michelin-awarded concept hailing from Manhattan, **Junoon** has become the go-to for inventive, yet authentic flavours since opening at the Shangri-La. Ask the knowledgeable staff for tips, and you won’t be disappointed. **Indego By Vineet** at Grosvenor House Dubai also strikes the perfect balance of restraint and inventiveness – as you would expect from multi-Michelin-starred chef

Vineet Bhatia – and the faultless food is matched by exceptional service. Another restaurant that’s nailed the often-tricky marriage of tradition and contemporary flair is **Rang Mahal by Atul Kochhar** at JW Marriott Marquis. With vivid murals and soft orange lighting, the striking space from London-based celebrity chef Atul Kochhar feels surprisingly intimate.

10 MORE TO TRY

- Roberto’s:** One of the city’s finest Italian restaurants also has fine Burj Khalifa views.
- Al Nafaorah:** The high-end Lebanese restaurant has an extensive menu of mezze, grilled meats and more.
- Toro Toro:** Enjoy South American fare from acclaimed Mexican chef Richard Sandoval in a very stylish setting.
- Prime68:** Sitting atop the JW Marriott Marquis, this sleek steakhouse serves meat cuts from across the globe.
- Qbara:** Opt for one of the superb tasting menus at this homegrown concept serving creative modern Arabic fusion cuisine.
- Bistrot Bagatelle:** Features a classic French-Med menu and a gorgeous Art Deco-inspired dining room.
- Jean-Georges Dining Room:** A classy spot serving contemporary French dishes from Jean-Georges Vongerichten.
- The Artisan:** Truly memorable Italian cuisine from the team behind Florence’s three Michelin-starred Enoteca Pinchiorri
- The Ivy:** Serves faultless British classics in very English surrounds (think leather banquettes and wood panelling).
- Yuan:** Known for its consistently excellent Szechuan cuisine and impressive dining space.

GRAPE EXPECTATIONS

Alcohol is available in licensed bars and restaurants, which are usually attached to hotels. Exceptions include some standalone restaurants in DIFC and Pier 7 in Dubai Marina.

George Calombaris

GEORGE TAKES A LITTLE PIECE OF MELBOURNE TO THE MIDDLE EAST ON HIS TRIP TO DUBAI, A DESTINATION HE VISITS AT LEAST TWICE A YEAR.

What attracted you to be a guest Australian chef at the Dubai Food Festival?

Dubai is such an epicentre, it's the centre of the world and for us Aussies, it's a great opportunity to promote what we do in Melbourne over in the Middle East, so when people are thinking about future travel, they have had a taste of what we do and come back to Melbourne for more.

What dish, delicacy or foodie experience did you most look forward to in Dubai – and how was it?

I've been in and out of Dubai the last 10 years, two to three times a year in fact, I love going there. Some 'go-to' places for me include Ravi's, the local Pakistani restaurant in Satwa, it's where all the workers go and I loved the experience, the simple tables, the food comes when it's ready, you can see it, it's fast and quick, but delicious food.

What influence has Emirati spices and cuisine had in your own style of cooking?

I think more than anything, the interest has been more than spices,

it's been going to visit the date market. My perception was there was only really one type of date, I never realised there were so many, and when going to experience the market, the dates I tasted were all quite different and complex in flavour. Meeting the stall holders and then talking about what they sold, there was real passion there. This experience overall has certainly influenced some of my dishes, including the dessert I prepared for the gala dinner during the Dubai Food Festival, peach baklava.

What produce did you choose to highlight in your masterclass recipes and why?

One of my dishes was kataifi prawns, the recipe is from my recent cookbook. The kataifi pastry is something synonymous in the Middle East, however rather than using it in a dessert we used it in a savoury dish here.

What was the best meal you ate in Dubai and where was it served?

The best meal I've had in Dubai was at Bu Qtair in Jumeirah Road. I loved the fact it's been there for so many years, it feels like it's ingrained in the

culture of Dubai. There's only a few dishes on the menu, it's affordable and simple and I think it embodies what I feel Middle Eastern food is all about.

Name your favourite place to enjoy a refreshing beverage in Dubai.

At.mosphere at Burj Khalifa – it provides a huge wow factor and you can see all over Dubai.

What is a must-do foodie experience for visitors to the city?

You've got to go to Bu Qtair in Jumeirah Road; you also need to tick off the list going to the Burj Khalifa, even if just for a drink. Definitely visit the date market, it's really eye-opening and you'll learn so much, and if you've got time, the fish market.

What will be on your must-do-list for your next visit to Dubai?

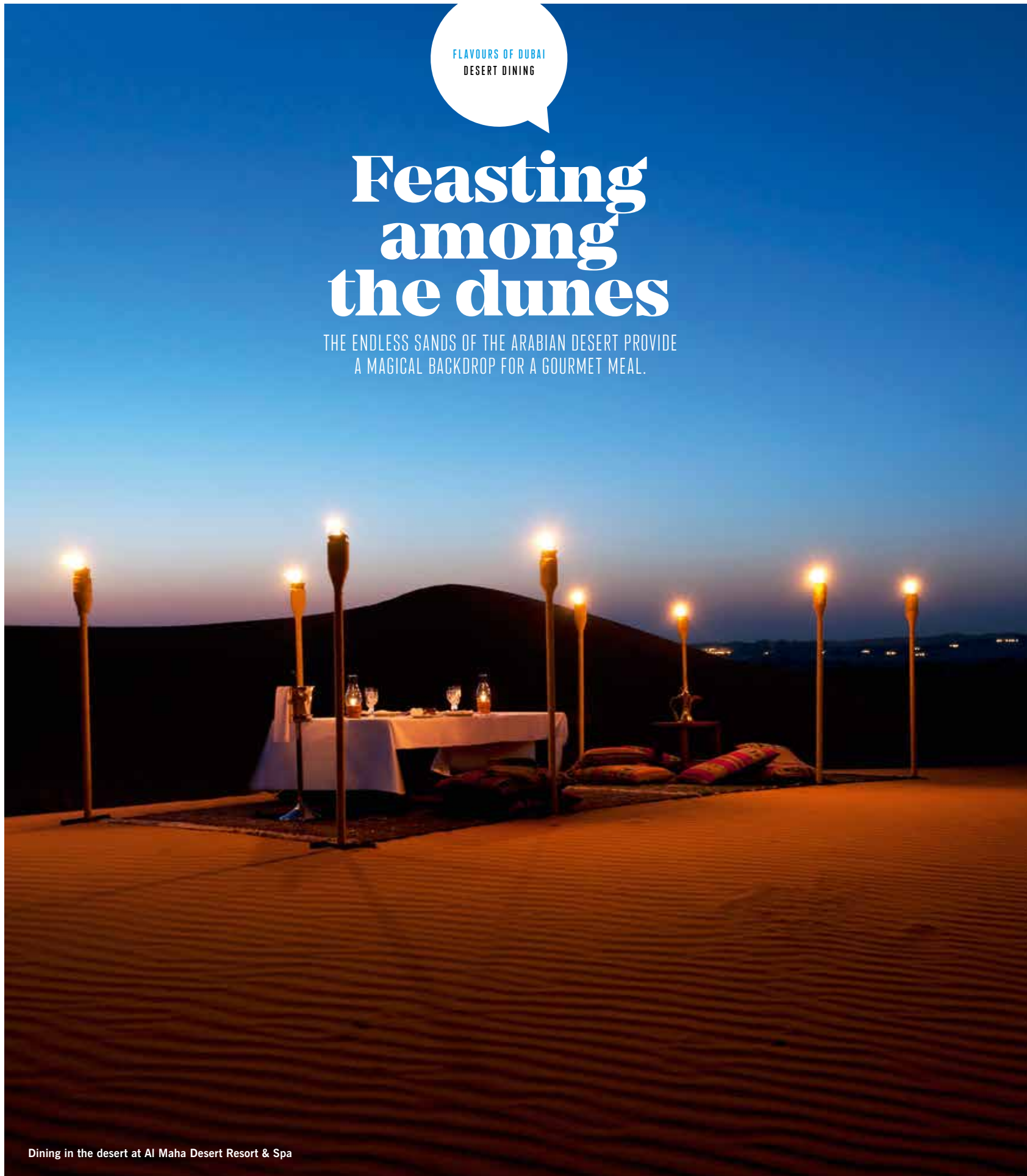
I like going to a place to discover some new and exciting things, meeting the people that recommend their local secrets and favourite places. I never like having a set plan, it's all about new experiences for me when I'm travelling. If I'm in another city – I want to know all about the best food places!



FLAVOURS OF DUBAI
DESERT DINING

Feasting among the dunes

THE ENDLESS SANDS OF THE ARABIAN DESERT PROVIDE
A MAGICAL BACKDROP FOR A GOURMET MEAL.



Dining in the desert at Al Maha Desert Resort & Spa



Arabian Adventures 'Just For You' desert safari experience



Bab Al Shams, Al Hadheerah Restaurant



Travelling in a vintage Land Rover with Platinum Heritage



Platinum Heritage Luxury Safaris

Exploring the enigmatic Arabian Desert is a quintessential Dubai experience not to be missed. While many tour operators offer desert safaris with wild dune bashing; followed by a barbecue dinner in a desert camp with belly dancing, henna tattoos and camel rides; **Platinum Heritage** and **Arabian Adventures** offer a range of experiences to suit any budget, as well as some upmarket experiences, with private desert safaris followed by a gourmet dinner or traditional breakfast, perfect for couples and small groups.

Arabian Adventures offers a Just For You private sunset experience, group Bedouin camel and dune safaris, overnight glamping and dune buggy adventure tours. Or choose a Platinum Heritage traditional group experience at a Bedouin camp, or opt for a private-dining experience.

After an afternoon drive in a Mercedes G-Wagon and vintage Land Rover through the tranquil Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve, spotting wildlife and stopping for a falconry demonstration, a six-course dinner is served at a lantern-lit table under the stars. Then you can retire to the *majlis*, complete with carpets and cushions, with an aromatic shisha pipe. Early morning dune drives are also available, followed by an Arabic breakfast, while a local Bedouin regales you with tales of what desert life was like in the pre-oil days.

The acclaimed **Al Maha Desert Resort & Spa** offers a private Dune Dining experience that is similarly luxe, and available to in-house guests and as well as those staying elsewhere. Set within an oasis overlooking the russet sands of the conservation reserve, some 65 kilometres southeast of Dubai, this romantic

eco-friendly resort is modelled on an old Arab fortress. With starched white linen, Persian carpets and flickering flame torches, the gourmet dinner – with menu options like marinated seafood antipasti, Arabic mezze and Catalan seafood stew – is a first-rate affair.

A more lively evening awaits at **Bab Al Shams Desert Resort**. Rising out of the dunes just 40 minutes from the bustling city centre, the fort-like spa resort is home to several open-air restaurants including **Al Hadheerah**. Based on an oasis village, the restaurant has a sumptuous Arabian buffet with mezze and salads, wood-fired ovens and spit roasts, and an array of desserts. Fuelling the 1001 Arabian Nights fantasy are falconry displays, camel rides, belly dancers, musicians and a spinning tanoura dancer. This is a great authentic experience that is very family-friendly and lots of fun.

FLAVOURS OF DUBAI
AL FRESCO
DINING

Food with a view

WHEN IT COMES TO AL FRESCO
DINING AND PANORAMIC
RESTAURANTS, DUBAI IS HARD
TO BEAT.

Al Muntaha at the Burj Al Arab



Views from the picturesque Pierchic



Halibut fish at Pierchic



Rustic decor at Inka

Gazing at Dubai's spectacular skyline or sparkling coastline over a good meal is one of the pleasures of visiting this ever-changing city. Located on level 122 of the Burj Khalifa, **At.mosphere** is the ultimate restaurant with a view. Richly decorated with polished mahogany walls and dark brown leather chairs, the modern European menu focuses on seafood and steak, while the view over the sea of skyscrapers speaks for itself.

If you'd rather look up at the world's tallest tower, **Inka** on the 31st floor of Sofitel Downtown Dubai has an unobstructed outlook. The modern Peruvian menu from chef Christian Motte, who comes from Lima via London's acclaimed Ceviche, features signature dishes such as grilled octopus with quinoa risotto and squid ink, along with four set menus (including a vegetarian option).

At the foot of the Burj is the Dubai Fountain, which shoots jets of water more than 150 metres into the air, accompanied by music, every half hour from 6pm until 11pm. The terrace at **Rivington Grill** of-

fers a great vantage point, together with excellent modern British cuisine, while **Serafina** boasts the largest licensed terrace overlooking the spectacle. It offers a wide selection of rustic northern Italian classics, plus more extravagant options like burrata with black truffle honey and gold leaf.

TOMO at Raffles Dubai, meanwhile, offers perhaps the city's most authentic Japanese from chef patron Chitoshi Takahashi – far removed from the fusion you'll find at the likes of Nobu and Zuma. The tatami floor terrace features low tables and outstanding views of Dubai's futuristic skyline, as does the al fresco bar serving sake and cocktails until late.

Down by the Creek, **Vivaldi by Alfredo Russo** at Sheraton Dubai Creek offers traditional Italian food with Michelin-star pedigree and a glassed terrace with picture-perfect views of the *abras* that ply the waterway. The views are just as magical aboard **Bateaux Dubai**, the city's premier floating restaurant that glides up and down the waters at night. With wood furnishings, gourmet cuisine

and a pianist, it's one of the most popular water-side venues.

If you'd rather be beside the Arabian Sea, **Sea Fu** at Four Seasons Resort is a chic beachfront restaurant with concertina doors opening onto a shaded terrace (after dark, the sunken lounge in front of the fire pit is the place to be). The Asian-inspired menu has varied tempting treats, including lobster macaroni and forbidden rice with scallops, prawns and calamari.

At the end of a wooden walkway in front of Al Qasr hotel in the Arabian-styled Madinat Jumeirah resort, **Pierchic** is one of Dubai's most picturesque spots. The sail-shaped Burj Al Arab hotel provides an Instagram-worthy backdrop day or night, while the Mediterranean menu includes caviar, oysters, scallops, sashimi and lobster, as well as an array of fresh fish. Outdoor seating is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis so it pays to be prompt.

Taking an abra through the tranquil waterways of Madinat Jumeirah to **Pai Thai** also scores high on the romance scale. Book a table on the inviting outdoor ter-



The romantic Pai Thai at Madinat Jumeirah



Fruity delights at Rivington Grill

race and enjoy what many believe to be the city's most accomplished Thai cuisine.

On the 27th floor of the Burj Al Arab, **Al Muntaha** – Arabic for 'The Ultimate' – certainly lives up to its name, with sky-high views over the coastline and city. It's best experienced during the day, but if you're heading here for dinner, book a table overlooking the glittering Palm and Dubai Marina to avoid staring at the inky darkness of the ocean. The modern European cuisine is very good but, like At.mosphere, you're paying a premium for the panorama.

One of our favourite views has to be from the terrace at **101 Dining Lounge & Bar** at the exclusive One&Only The Palm. Take the water taxi that departs from sister hotel, One&Only Royal Mirage, and time your arrival to watch the sun set. Then dine on tapas and fresh seafood, as the resident DJ entertains the fashionable crowd.

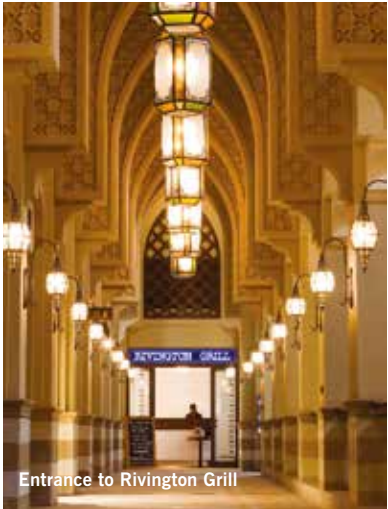
The Beach at JBR is a low-rise beach-front mall with a number of restaurants (although most don't serve alcohol). With beautiful Moorish tiles and a latticework ceiling, **Almaz by Momo** also has two outdoor terraces that are perfect for people watching. The contemporary North African menu has favourites like tagines and pastilla, while the patisserie and ice cream section will tempt even the most disciplined diner.

QUICK AND CASUAL

Après: This chalet-style restaurant overlooking the slopes of Ski Dubai at the Mall of the Emirates serves pastas, wood-fired pizzas and French bistro classics. malloftheemirates.com

Bayt Al Wakeel: Watch the abras cruise past from this breezy terrace jutting out over Dubai Creek as you enjoy hot and cold mezze, grilled meat and fish dishes. visitdubai.com/en/pois/bayt-al-wakeel

Leopold's of London: With an outdoor terrace overlooking the ocean at The Beach at JBR, this trendy café serves excellent modern European fare. leopoldsoflondon.com



Entrance to Rivington Grill



One&Only The Palm



Seared scallops at Rivington Grill



At the end of a wooden walkway in front of Al Qasr hotel in the Arabian-styled Madinat Jumeirah resort, Pierchic is one of Dubai's most picturesque spots. The sail-shaped Burj Al Arab hotel provides an Instagram-worthy backdrop day or night.

Dining over ocean panoramas at Pierchic

Gary Mehigan

GARY SHARES HIS CHOCOLATE INDULGENCE,
SMOKEY EGGPLANT AND MEMORIES OF THE 123RD
FLOOR OF BURJ KHALIFA.

What attracted you to be a guest Australian chef at the Dubai Food Festival?

Dubai is a great international hub, a city on the move. It was exciting to be part of an international food festival and I got to go with my buddies!

What dish, delicacy or foodie experience did you most look forward to in Dubai – and how was it?

I love the labna, hummus and smokey eggplant - there is nowhere else that seems to make it as good.

What influence has Emirati spices and cuisine had in your own style of cooking?

I love using Middle Eastern spices - particularly cumin, fennel and sumac which I use a lot in my cooking. Also a big fan of purslane (green leafy plant) - I know it's not a spice but I love it and you see it everywhere.

What produce did you choose to highlight in your masterclass recipes and why?

I wanted my classes to be fun, friendly and comfortable, which is what my food is all about. I chose

chocolate because it's indulgent and pretty much everybody's favourite. I am also a big fan of Vietnamese and Chinese food, I used duck, fish sauce, coriander, chilli, ginger - delicious.

What was the best meal you ate in Dubai and where was it served?

At Ravi's Restaurant in Satwa, serving Pakistani food. It was local and down to earth - it was recommended by a friend and I loved it; delicious.

Name your favourite place to enjoy a refreshing beverage in Dubai.

Burj Khalifa at Atmosphere Bar on the 123rd floor. It has such a great view across the city.

What is a must-do foodie experience for visitors to the city?

Bu Qtair as it has the best fried fish in town. It may have basic décor but is worth a trip for the taste.

What will be on your must-do-list for your next visit to Dubai?

I would love to do a desert safari, haven't done this yet. I love the idea of a four-wheel drive through the desert and staying at a Bedouin campsite.

FLAVOURS OF DUBAI
DINNER AND DANCE

Supper clubs

FINE FOOD, LIVE MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT COMBINE AT DUBAI'S GLAMOROUS SUPPER CLUBS.



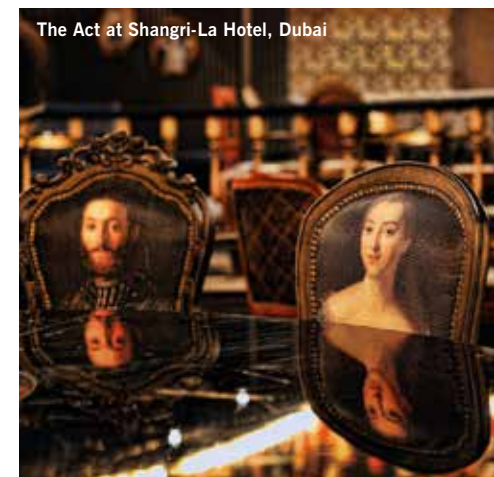
Pacha



MusicHall Dubai



Dumplings at Pacha



The Act at Shangri-La Hotel, Dubai



Seafire at Atlantis, The Palm

The dinner-and-a-show concept has proved popular in Dubai, and makes for a memorable night out. On the 42nd floor of the Shangri-La Hotel and styled like an opulent Victorian theatre with velvet curtains and balcony booths, **The Act** is one of the city's pioneering venues. Directed by David Ley, formerly of the famous Box Nightclub in New York City, the show takes place every Tuesday and Wednesday evening with a sizzling mix of cabaret, vaudeville and aerial artistry accompanied by authentic Peruvian cuisine.

Pacha Ibiza Dubai is another hip nightspot that brings the entertainment to your table. As well as boasting big name DJs and the city's best-dressed clubbers, the three-level venue at Madinat Jumeirah also hosts a dinner show every Tuesday to Saturday. The impressive spectacle features aerialists, acrobats, contortionists, dancers and magicians, with a pan-Asian à la carte menu, or three

set menu options, served in between acts. If you fancy hitting the dance floor afterwards, plan your visit for Thursday or Friday when the nightclub and rooftop are open until the wee small hours.

Beirut's famed music concept, **MusicHall**, has been a huge hit since opening in 2013 at Jumeirah Zabeel Saray on The Palm, thanks to its high-calibre performers and stylish surrounds. It's hard to put a label on this eclectic dinner show, which features around ten different acts performing everything from rock to Latino, gypsy to jazz, funk to folk, and rotating every seven minutes or so. The Mediterranean-inspired à la carte menu features veal, seafood and chicken dishes alongside sushi and sharing plates.

Also on the iconic man-made island, **Seafire** at Atlantis, The Palm hosts two weekly live music shows that complement its butter-soft steaks. Every Tuesday, diners are serenaded by the sultry tunes of the

Buena Vista Social Club while enjoying a three-course tasting menu served with Havana Club cocktails. Wednesdays, meanwhile, feature the smooth sounds of Ol' Blue Eyes as the fantastic Frank Sinatra tribute band entertains guests over a four-course menu and heady Jack Daniel's concoctions. The restaurant has its own signature breed of cattle from Australia, alongside Master Kobe Wagyu and US Black Angus, making this a top choice for meat connoisseurs.

AFTER DARK HOT SPOTS

Mahiki: The Polynesian-themed nightspot at Jumeirah Beach Hotel serves gourmet bites like seared salmon and Wagyu sliders alongside cheesy tunes.

Embassy: Spread over three floors at Grosvenor House, the upmarket club has live DJs and a sleek restaurant serving modern European cuisine.

China Grill: The dimly-lit and atmospheric hotspot features a resident DJ, mezzanine lounge bar and downstairs dining space serving excellent Asian fusion.



Manu Feildel

FROM SCALLOPS TO SPICE, MANU FEILDEL CHANNELS HIS INNER ARABIAN 'KNIGHT' WHILE DINING AND COOKING IN DUBAI.

What attracted you to be a guest Australian chef at the Dubai Food Festival?

I have always stopped over in Dubai, but never left the airport. I love Middle Eastern flavours, so when the Dubai Food Festival asked me to participate, it was a perfect opportunity.

What dish, delicacy or foodie experience did you most look forward to in Dubai – and how was it?

Visiting the desert for an authentic experience and going to Al Maha Desert Resort & Spa was an amazing adventure. We were welcomed with a local dinner in the middle of the dunes.

What influence has Emirati spices and cuisine had on your own style of cooking?

I've always loved and used Middle Eastern spices and this trip was a great reminder to use them in more and different ways in my own recipes and daily cooking.

What produce did you choose to highlight in your masterclass recipes and why?

I did a session with scallops, in particu-

lar a favourite recipe of mine, and also my students' favourite once they have cooked it – Scallop Boudin, it never seems to fail to please.

What was the best meal you ate in Dubai and where was it served?

We ate with a group at a traditional Arabic restaurant near the Dubai Mall, called Em Sherif at Address Downtown. It was a 32-dish set-menu and just an amazing spread. Also Catch at The Fairmont Hotel on Sheikh Zayed Road was another enjoyable meal with a great atmosphere.

Name your favourite place to enjoy a refreshing beverage in Dubai.

Sitting by the pool at The Palace Downtown, in one of their cabanas at night, with the water show in the background and good company.

What is a must-do foodie experience for visitors to the city?

Shawarma (Arabian meats grilled on a spit) – they are delicious, a quick and easy feed.

What will be on your must-do-list for your next visit to Dubai?

Less work, more eating!

FLAVOURS OF DUBAI
INDEPENDENT CAFÉS

Coffee culture

HOME TO THE FASTEST GROWING COFFEE MARKET IN THE WORLD, INDEPENDENT CAFÉS ARE BOOMING IN DUBAI.



Common Grounds



Cafe Rider



Food from Tom & Serg

Third wave coffee culture, with its single-origin coffee, latte art and hipster surrounds, is flourishing with funky, independent cafés and local roasteries fuelling the boom.



The Sum of Us



Bystro

The symbol of Bedouin hospitality, coffee has been associated with Arabia since the 15th century. Dubai is home to thousands of coffee shops, ranging from old-school cafés serving traditional Arabic coffee, or *qahwa* – a bitter brew flavoured with cardamom – to international chains such as Starbucks and Gloria Jean’s.

Yet, third wave coffee culture, with its single-origin coffee, latte art and hipster surrounds, is a relatively new phenomenon. Nevertheless, it is flourishing with funky, independent cafés and local roasteries fuelling the boom. And it probably comes as no surprise to learn that an Aussie from Melbourne has been at the forefront of Dubai’s coffee revolution.

Tom Arnel and Spanish-born Sergio Lopez have been credited with bringing

Australian café culture to Dubai with **Tom & Serg**, a warehouse-style duplex with exposed brickwork, concrete flooring and an open kitchen in the industrial area of Al Quoz. Expats and locals flock here for fantastic espresso, filter and speciality coffee, along with an all-day brunch menu with dishes like Turkish poached eggs and salted caramel French toast.

Tom & Serg’s coffee comes from sister café, **The Sum of Us**, near the Trade Centre at the other end of town. With a roastery and sourdough bakery on site, the smell of roasted beans and baking bread is reason enough to linger, but the food is pretty special too. The menu spans from breakfast to dinner, with dishes such as confit lamb and quinoa salad, and prawn linguini. The duo has opened a third outlet, **Common Grounds**, at the Mall of the Emirates,

and their first licensed venue, **Brunswick Sports Club**, is set to open soon.

On the outskirts of Al Quoz, which is home to the Alserkal Avenue arts district, **Café Rider** offers a unique blend of specialty coffee and motorcycles. While head barista Dima, who represented the UAE at the 2014 World Barista Championships in Seattle, meticulously creates syphon and slow-drip cold brews and full-fat lattes (topped with impressive frothy art), mechanics custom build American motorcycles behind the glass-walled workshop. There is no food served, but you can order in from the nearby **Boutique Kitchen**, which does amazing burgers and salads.

Bystro in Al Manara also takes its coffee seriously, with speciality coffee and cold brews infused with orange or cardamom. The café serves break-

fast favourites like smashed avocado with poached eggs and feta, alongside soups, salads, sandwiches and mains like pumpkin falafel salad and blackened jerk chicken.

Long-standing favourite **Lime Tree Café**, established in 2001 offers organic fare trade tea and coffees with lunch and breakfast menu and their famous carrot cake.

Tucked away on the first floor of Sunset Mall, **Spill the Bean** focuses on organic, fair-trade single origin coffees and top quality blends. The baristas know their stuff and will also brew up a Turkish coffee for you, which is darker and thicker than the Arabic version. On the menu are eggs, pancakes, bagels, sandwiches and salads, as well as gluten-free quiches, cakes and muffins and a handful of vegan treats including a velvety berry and lime ‘cheesecake’.

In the heart of Jumeirah, **Pantry Café** is a warehouse-style space with large windows, cement flooring, exposed ceilings and a deli counter with cured meats and artisan cheeses. They serve single-origin Ethiopian coffee and a house blend created by local roastery, Raw, and you can upgrade to a bottomless cup with your breakfast order. The menu features organic eggs (try the spicy Shakshouka eggs), soups, salads, gourmet burgers and wood-fired pizzas. There’s also a second branch in Business Bay near Downtown.

For more of a traditional atmosphere, head to **The Majlis Dubai** in the grounds of Jumeirah Mosque, the city’s only mosque open to non-Muslims. Try a Camelccino or Camellatte made with camel milk, a staple of the Bedouin diet until the mid-20th century, and the café’s own blend of Ethiopian beans, or

Arabic coffee served from a dallah pot. When it comes to food, we recommend the Emirati Experience, a selection of sweet and savoury treats served on tiered plates. With Arabesque décor, leather armchairs and well-stocked shelves with books about Arabic culture, this is a lovely place to loiter before or after visiting the mosque.

Mama Tani Café in Town Centre mall on Jumeirah Beach Road is another spot that’s popular with locals. Owned by Emirati siblings, Omar and Maitha Alshamsi, it serves Arabic and Turkish coffee alongside espresso, camel milk hot chocolate and *karak* (a sweet, spiced tea similar to masala chai). The café specialises in *khameer*, a traditional Emirati bread stuffed with around 30 different sweet and savoury fillings, but you’ll also find soups, salads and bagels.



Snails in the
Garden at Play

Local heroes

DUBAI IS USHERING IN AN EXCITING NEW ERA OF RESTAURANTS BORN IN THE EMIRATE.

When Dubai's first celebrity chef restaurant landed in 2001 – Gordon Ramsay's Verre – it marked the awakening of the city's culinary ambitions. Since then, Dubai has welcomed a raft of big name chefs and international restaurant brands, creating an incredibly diverse and multicultural dining scene.

But you'll also discover a burgeoning scene of homegrown concepts, influenced by traditional Emirati cuisine and the flavours of the 200 plus nationalities that call Dubai home. In fact, last year's Dubai Food Festival paid homage

to its homegrown heroes, a testament to the growing number of culinary entrepreneurs in the city.

Chef Reif Othman is one of them. The former head chef of Zuma has recently opened **Play** on the 36th floor of the H Hotel. With spectacular skyline views from floor-to-ceiling windows and a chocolate brown and gold interior, the space oozes class. Serving 'Mediterranean', a blend of Asian and Mediterranean flavours, everything is cooked beautifully and presented imaginatively, from the Wagyu chorizo croquettes to the miso-marinated black cod.



Boca

In the same hotel, **OKKU** is an uber-chic restaurant, bar and nightclub rolled into one that is many a local's go-to spot for modern Japanese cuisine. The menu features sushi and sashimi, plus small sharing plates – don't miss the wasabi tiger shrimp – and mains like miso lobster onigirayaki and citrus-soy lamb. The 'Disco Sushi' Friday brunch is especially fun.

With floor-to-ceiling glass overlooking the beach at JBR, chef Rabah Samra's contemporary Emirati food at **Seven Sands** has to work hard to compete with the views. Luckily, it more than delivers with fresh interpretations of traditional dishes such as bezar prawns and fish fougla cooked in aromatic rice. The staff can guide you through the menu, making Seven Sands a top spot to experience a cuisine you may not be that familiar with.

Silvena Rowe is another Dubai-based chef who's producing modern Middle Eastern cuisine with plenty of flair. **Omnia by Silvena**, her flagship venue on Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Boulevard, is a design-led brasserie serving a wide selection of salads, soups, meats and seafood flavoured with Arabic spices and marinades, as well as raw and gluten-free recipes. It doesn't have an alcohol license, but the creative mocktails will soon make you forget all about wine.

Emirati entrepreneur Hessa Al Qassim has opted for Scandinavian design and a modern Mediterranean menu at **Culinary Boutique**, a restaurant-cum-gourmet cooking school on Jumeirah Beach Road. Dishes like truffle ravioli and Wagyu carpaccio impress, while the cooking classes range from the art of Emirati cuisine to mastering Peruvian ceviches.

Al Fanar, meanwhile, is a local favourite whose décor harks back to the Dubai of old. Modelled on a pearl merchant's home,



Truffle Ravioli at Culinary Boutique

Emirati entrepreneur Hessa Al Qassim has opted for Scandinavian design and a modern Mediterranean menu at Culinary Boutique, a restaurant-cum-gourmet cooking school on Jumeirah Beach Road. Dishes like truffle ravioli and Wagyu carpaccio impress, while the cooking classes range from the art of Emirati cuisine to mastering Peruvian ceviches.

the restaurant along the Canal Walk in Festival City serves up traditional Emirati cuisine such as *machboos* (a rice dish similar to biriyani), *maleh* (salt-cured fish) and grilled meats and fish.

Bu Qtair is another much-loved dining institution. For over two decades, the no-frills eatery served the catch of the day from a humble portacabin in Jumeirah, although it has recently moved to a simple restaurant in the nearby fishing harbour. The menu remains the same – simple fried fish and a spicy fish curry made with coconut, turmeric, coriander and sardines served with rice and paratha.

An initiative by Marriott

hotels to help budding entrepreneurs open new restaurants has produced two fantastic home-grown concepts. At **The Croft** at Dubai Marriott Harbour Hotel, top British chef Darren Velvick – a protégé of Gordon Ramsay – serves easily the city's best casual British cuisine with an emphasis on local and organic ingredients. And like all good gastro-pubs, there's a fine selection of gin and craft beers too.

Peruvian chef Edgar Hurtado is in charge of the other successful start-up, **Garden** at JW Marriott Marquis. Overflowing with plants and colourful Peruvian artwork, the décor is hip and modern, while the menu features world-

class ceviches, meat and seafood mains, and half a dozen different Pisco cocktails. The informed, friendly service is among the best in the city.

Sharing concepts are popular in Dubai and **BOCA**, which serves tasty tapas from Spain, Italy and France, does it well. Located in DIFC, there's a trendy bar, dining room and outdoor terrace, but we love the cellar with its communal table and walls of wine. Head down here for the eight-dish tasting menu (including the signature black rice with scallops and clams) paired with eight wines, starting with a Spanish sherry and ending with a French brandy.

And finally, **The Farm** is a tranquil restaurant located in the exclusive Al Barari estate about 15 minutes' drive from Downtown. The brainchild of the local Zaal family, the restaurant and outdoor terrace overlook lush gardens and a small lake and serves modern Mediterranean and Thai cuisine. Make a day of it and book an indulgent treatment at the estate's zen-like spa.



Play



Wagyu Himalayan Shioyaki at OKKU



Mediterranean cuisine at Play



Terrace at Seven Sands



Culinary Boutique



Shared plates at Boca

Colour, spice and all things to entice

EAT YOUR WAY AROUND DUBAI AT THESE COLOURFUL MARKETS.

Peruse the Spice Souk in Deira



Dates in Deira



Deira Fish market



Vegetables galore

The small but wonderfully pungent Spice Souk in Deira has mounds of herbs and spices piled high in sacks outside each stall.



Colourful fresh produce at the Deira fruit and vegetable market

Old Dubai sprang up around the Creek in the 1800s as a centre of fishing, pearling and trading. The area is still home to atmospheric *souks* (markets) selling goods to locals and tourists that line the Creek, bound for India, Pakistan and Iran.

The small but wonderfully pungent **Spice Souk** in Deira has mounds of herbs and spices piled high in sacks outside each souk. Stock up on cardamom, turmeric and saffron, as well as dates, rose water and frankincense. Bargaining is the norm in the souks, so be prepared for some good-natured haggling.

Less aromatic but arguably more atmospheric is the **Deira Fish Market**. Open from 5am daily, it's a lively place with chatty fishmongers and a wide array of fish and seafood.

Look beyond favourites like *hammour* and *shaari* and choose a more sustainable species such as *faskar* (two bar seabream) and *jesh* (yellow bar angelfish). Then take your catch to the Egyptian grill masters at the hole-in-the-wall **Grill and Shark** restaurant next door and enjoy a cheap fresh-cooked lunch. There's also a large fruit and vegetable souk adjacent to the fish market that is worth a visit.

For a smaller-scale market experience, head to **Souq Al Bahar 4 Fish** in Umm Suqeim 1. Opened in 2014, the covered outdoor market is clean and organised, with around 40 stalls offering fresh fish and seafood including lobster and crabs. If you're feeling peckish, wander over to **Seaview Restaurant** which has a lovely outdoor terrace overlooking

the glistening harbour.

In the gloriously green surrounds of Zabeel Park, **Ripe Food & Craft Market** is a great place to spend the morning grazing and shopping for unique arts and crafts. There are over 100 traders selling organic and seasonal fruit and vegetables, coffee, and local honey, along with street food stalls and trucks such as **Raw Coffee** and **Moti Roti**. It takes place on Fridays from 9am until 2pm during October to April.

On Saturdays, **Ripe Night Market** at Al Barsha Pond Park is just as much fun with food and craft stalls galore, twinkling fairy lights and live music. Pull up a patch of grass, or find a seat at one of the communal tables, and enjoy the community atmosphere and delicious food on offer from 4pm to 9pm during the cooler months.



Shannon Bennett

HEAD CHEF AND DIRECTOR AT MELBOURNE'S VUE DE MONDE, SHANNON BENNETT FINDS THE MULTI-REGIONAL CUISINE OF DUBAI A HIGHLIGHT, ENJOYING SOME LOCAL HOTSPOTS.

What attracted you to be a guest Australian chef at the Dubai Food Festival?

Dubai is a beast of a city, it's a city of riches, where exotic silks and spices contrast with space-age buildings and there are still links to Dubai's Bedouin past. I love that you can dine at local favourites such as Ravi's restaurant and Calicut Paragon, then finish your evening with a drink at The Jetty Lounge, One&Only Royal Mirage. I find travelling, experiencing other cultures and new tastes, new techniques, incredibly inspiring. Dubai has always proven exciting. I like searching Dubai for unique cooking techniques that I can bring back to our kitchens. I loved being involved in the Dubai Food Festival and exploring what unique produce and cooking techniques Dubai has to offer

What dish, delicacy or foodie experience did you most look forward to in Dubai – and how was it?

I find it fascinating that you can take a few layers away from Dubai's dining scene and uncover amazing restaurants with Pakistani, Indian, Palestinian and Middle Eastern influences, for me, this is the real Dubai.

What influence has Emirati spices and cuisine had in your own style of cooking?

I like to keep in mind Dubai's cultural history and local restaurants to inspire my recipes such as Bu Qtair Cafeteria, Ravi's Restaurant and Zaroob.

What produce did you choose to highlight in your masterclass recipes and why?

Marron, tarragon and coral – this dish showcases the best of Australian produce. Also I made a warm chocolate orange mousse which was a fan highlight in *MasterChef* Season 7.

What was the best meal you ate in Dubai and where was it served?

Zaroob – a cross between Palestinian street food and fast food. Dinner after 10pm has never been better. Open all day and night, every day. I loved this place, who wouldn't when you can spend less than \$50 for two people? Breakfast is highly recommended – eggs cooked in bread with fresh tomato salads, an array of dips, and freshly squeezed fruit and vegetable juices. We also had a great time at Catch Restaurant in the Fairmont Hotel at Sheikh Zayed Road.

Name your favourite place to enjoy a refreshing beverage in Dubai.

The Jetty Lounge – one of the best places for a relaxed drink on the sand. A frozen margarita goes down well, or if you're after something simpler try an Estrella, one of my favourite beers.

What is a must-do foodie experience for visitors to the city?

Dinner at Ravi's restaurant in Satwa – the restaurant is only ten minutes in a cab from all the major hotels. Communal tables are shared with mostly men of Pakistani origin. With 1970s bathroom tiles on the walls, it has unbelievable curries, rice dishes and fresh flatbreads. Cutlery is given to Westerners, but it's much more fun doing what everyone else is doing and using your fingers (right hand only) to dip the bread into the lentils and butter chicken.

What will be on your must-do-list for your next visit to Dubai?

Next time I want to get back to Calicut Paragon restaurant - as authentic Keralan Indian food as you can get. I can't recommend it highly enough. It's off the beaten track, only locals go here.

Culinary happenings

WITH A HOST OF INTERACTIVE TOURS AND FESTIVALS, EPICUREANS ARE WELL CATERED FOR IN DUBAI.

Sweet temptations with Frying Pan Adventures

Meet chefs with
Frying Pan Adventures

Try local specialties

The best dining spots with FoodDiva Dine Around Dubai

Dive in to the best dishes

Over the last decade, Dubai's reputation as a culinary capital has continued to grow. And as the city's enthusiasm for all things edible has developed, a number of food festivals and culinary tours have sprung up.

Without doubt the biggest event on the culinary calendar is the **Dubai Food Festival**. Held annually over three weeks during February and March, it features markets, masterclasses, celebrity chefs, beach parties, food truck festivals and much more. This year's event also welcomed the inaugural **Dubai Restaurant Week**,

whereby 30 fine dining restaurants offered discounted set menus, giving globetrotting gastronomes yet another reason to visit.

Dubai Food Festival incorporates **Taste of Dubai**, another hugely popular food festival that turns ten in 2017. The three-day al fresco event takes place in March and features fine dining food stalls and cooking demonstrations by celebrity chefs (Tom Aikens and Atul Kochhar were in the kitchen this year), together with a bumper line-up of live music.

Local food bloggers have also led the way when it comes to fun food

tours. Arva Ahmed launched **Frying Pan Adventures** in 2013, walking explorations of Old Dubai that uncover the best ethnic eats that are firmly off the tourist map. Today, it is the city's leading food tour operator with a range of fantastic itineraries available year-round, including the Middle Eastern Food Pilgrimage and Little India on a Plate. If you're interested in exploring Dubai's melting pot of cuisines and the hidden gems known only to locals that are off the regular tourist beat, these tours are a must-do to immerse yourself in the local culture.

Meanwhile, Samantha Wood, the

blogger behind **FoodDiva**, takes foodies on a secret dining adventure at three high-end restaurants. During the **FoodDiva Dine Around Dubai** experience, diners enjoy signature dishes presented by chefs and paired with wine chosen by sommelier Lindsay Trivers, while Samantha, a 15-year UAE expatriate known for her honest restaurant reviews, dishes up platefuls of foodie wisdom. Visit the website to see when the next event takes place. Over at **Secret Squirrel Food**, you can follow Australian expat Karen McLean on her secret food tips for Dubai.

Those looking to learn more about

Emirati cuisine should visit **The Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding** in the historic Al Fahidi district. The interactive cultural meals feature typical Emirati dishes such as chicken machboos, while guests are encouraged to ask questions about local culture with no topic off limits, learning about the history and culture of the region, while indulging in either a traditional breakfast or lunch.

Arabian Adventures also offers a range of food tours, such as Flavours of Dubai which explores 2nd of December Street, one of the city's most colourful streets that is lined with ethnic

eateries, followed by an authentic Emirati meal. It's a real off-the-beaten-track experience and a great chance to sample regional street food.

Desert Adventures is another recommended tour operator that offers a number of tempting culinary experiences. The Secrets of Arabia tour, for example, explores the enchanting Al Fahidi quarter with its narrow *sikkas* (lanes) and restored *barjeels* (wind towers), before feasting on a four-course Arabic meal by candlelight at the impossibly romantic Bastakiah Nights restaurant overlooking the Creek – desert dining in ultimate style!



Family indulgence at Zheng He's

FLAVOURS OF DUBAI
FOODIE INDULGENCE

Delicious decadence

FROM EXTRAVAGANT BRUNCHES TO IBIZA-STYLE BEACH CLUBS, DUBAI IS THE PLACE TO REALLY INDULGE.

Known as The City of Gold, Dubai more than lives up to its name with a dazzling array of edible gold treats. Satisfy your sweet tooth with the Ultimate White Chocolate Gold Sundae topped with gold leaf and Sevruga caviar at **Fortnum & Mason** next to The Dubai Mall. It costs Dhs210 (A\$80), but can easily be shared between two. Or plump for the Black Diamond Sundae, flavoured with Iranian saffron and topped with slices of black truffle and 23-carat gold, at **Scoop**i on Jumeirah Beach Road. Served in

a Versace dish that you get to take home, it costs Dhs2,999 (A\$1,150). Coffee lovers can enjoy The Palace Cappuccino topped with 22-carat gold dust for Dhs80 (A\$31) in Al Bayt, a lobby lounge at **The Palace Downtown Dubai** decorated with Moroccan lanterns, inlaid pearl tables and keyhole-shaped doors. Tea connoisseurs, meanwhile, should visit **TWG Tea Salon & Boutique** at The Dubai Mall, which stocks over 800 exclusive tea blends from across the world including Gold Yin Zhen. A pot of the silvery white tea leaves



Traiteur seafood brunch



The Palace Downtown



Zheng He's



Traiteur cheese at brunch

coated with 24-carat gold costs Dhs998 (A\$382).

Come cocktail hour, those with a love of the finer things in life should head to Skyview Bar at **Burj Al Arab** for the signature Diamonds Are Forever cocktail. Served in a Swarovski Crystalline glass with diamonds in the stem, it contains L'Heraud Grand Champagne 1906 vintage Cognac, bitters from Germany and 24-carat gold flake Champagne. At Dhs4,900 (A\$1,875) including the take-home glass, it was, until recently, the most expensive cocktail in the world.

Friday brunch, meanwhile, is a Dubai institution. But while a leisurely café affair may spring to mind, brunch in Dubai means a lavish spread with free-flowing bubbly, resident DJs and a glamorous crowd. Most brunches take place from around 12pm until 4pm, although a growing number of restaurants now offer evening and Saturday brunches too.

Set on stilts over the Arabian Gulf, **Pierchic** hosts one of the most unforgettable experiences, with a platter of fresh seafood to share followed by a four-course set menu, paired with Henriot or

Laurent Perrier Grand Siècle Champagne. Guests are encouraged to dress with a touch of white, adding to the chic atmosphere.

Overlooking Dubai Creek, **Traiteur** at Park Hyatt Dubai features an elevated show kitchen where you can watch executive chef Daniel Hoeffler and his team work their magic. The classy buffet brunch features lobster, prawns and meats from the grill station, along with shucked Fine de Claire oysters, and Besserat de Bellefon Champagne. Housed in a wine cellar, the Temple of Cheese has port pairings from sommelier Remi Torres, while the mouth-watering dessert selection is just as vast.

Set on the fairytale waterways at Madinat Jumeirah with stellar views of Burj Al Arab, **Zheng He's** offers a Beijing duck brunch. The theatrical tableside duck carving from BBQ Duck Master Yin makes this one of the city's most unique brunches, and you can also indulge in experimental cocktails, richly flavoured duck starters and dim sum, and mains that include Wagyu, lobster, fish and, of course, duck.

High tea may be a quintessentially British tradition, but it has been raised to an art form in Dubai.

High tea may be a quintessentially British tradition, but it has been raised to an art form in Dubai. Most hotels offer daily afternoon tea, but when it comes to opulent settings, few can compete with the Ottoman-inspired décor at **Jumeirah Zabeel Saray**. Afternoon tea in the Sultan's Lounge features tiered trays of Turkish sweet and savoury delicacies served with JING teas and Turkish coffee. Highlights include the 24-carat gold truffles and the deliciously moist pistachio olive oil cake created by master patissier, Eric Lanlard.

With a sweeping double marble staircase and French neo-classical interiors, the recently opened **St. Regis Dubai** exudes old-world luxury. High tea takes place at Sidra on the mezzanine floor, with bespoke tea blends or bubbly paired with sandwiches, pastries, scones with homemade jams, and petit fours.

Film fans will love the afternoon tea offering at **Theatre by Rhodes** at VOX Cinemas at Mall of the Emirates, which combines luxurious leather seats and walnut-wood finishings with a menu devised by Michelin-starred chef, Gary Rhodes. While you enjoy the latest blockbuster, dainty sandwiches, pastries, and scones are served to your seat, along with fragrant teas in bone china cups.

Even going to the beach takes on a whole new level of luxury in Dubai, with high-end beach clubs such as **Cove Beach**, an idyllic new spot with a laidback, South of France vibe at Jumeirah Beach Hotel. The restaurant serves Med-inspired seafood, salads and homemade pastas, while the bar specialises in rosé wines from Provence.

Just launched on the man-made Pearl Jumeirah Island, **Nikki Beach** has more than a hint of Ibiza about it. The sprawling blue-tiled pool area is surrounded by white daybeds and cabanas where you can sip Champagne and cocktails and groove along to the resident DJs. The beach club is part of a 52,000-square-metre resort that will eventually include a hotel, spa and three restaurants.



Jumeirah Zabeel Saray Sultan's Lounge

Matt Moran

SUCCULENT DATES, ROSEWATER AND HUMMUS – THE CHEF OF SYDNEY'S ARIA RESTAURANT SWOONS AT DUBAI'S MARKETS.

What attracted you to be a guest Australian chef at the Dubai Food Festival?

It's such a privilege to be invited to these events and Dubai's always been very high on my list! Even though I'm pretty busy these days and travel often, I still had not visited so I was really keen to get there and excited to explore what Dubai has to offer. I wanted to check out the culinary scene, visit the food markets, go to some great restaurants and experience some authentic Emirati cuisine.

What dish, delicacy or foodie experience did you most look forward to in Dubai – and how was it?

We had a pretty busy schedule while we were there but we did manage to go to some of the local restaurants. I had some great seafood, shawarma, Pakistani food and the dates in particular (which I know are a local favourite), were honestly some of the best I've ever tasted! They had such a soft flesh and just melted in the mouth, the flavour was incredible.

What influence has Emirati spices and cuisine had in your own style of cooking?

I love Middle Eastern cuisine and one of the interesting things about

the culinary scene in Dubai is that it's so eclectic - because it's so multicultural you have a pretty diverse array of options. And because of the melting pot of cultures to be found there, be it Indian, Pakistani, Lebanese or many others, it's reflected back in the cuisine too - even a lot of Emirati cuisine has taken influence from elsewhere. And that's not dissimilar to the Australian food scene - we take a lot of influence from other cultures. I've always loved Middle Eastern food - fresh herbs and aromatic spices, hummus, rosewater etc, I could go on and on....

What produce did you choose to highlight in your masterclass recipes and why?

At the masterclass, I demonstrated a lobster, radish, kombu butter dish (pictured). It's been on the menu

at ARIA Sydney and it's a personal favourite of mine. The umami of the kombu butter really complements the lobster and the radish adds texture and balance. It's a beautiful, clean, great tasting dish.

What was the best meal you ate in Dubai and where was it served?

I wish I'd had time to explore more places - we had a fun but busy schedule with the Dubai Food Festival while we were there. We did visit La Petite Maison at DIFC, which is also a favourite of mine in London; and Ravi's in Satwa. If I was able to stay for longer I would definitely have checked out Em Sherif and some of the traditional tea and coffee houses too.

What is a must-do foodie experience for visitors to the city?

To just enjoy the diversity that's on offer there - be sure to check out some fantastic restaurants, visit the traditional markets and make sure you try some of the authentic and unique Emirati cuisine too.

What will be on your must-do-list for your next visit to Dubai?

To visit the places we didn't get around to this time! I'd love to experience more of the traditional food. I'm looking forward to heading back there soon.



Restaurants on wheels

WHETHER YOU'RE CRAVING WAGYU BEEF SLIDERS OR SPICY FISH TACOS, DUBAI'S FOOD TRUCKS OFFER UP PLENTY OF TASTY TREATS.



Deliciously salted



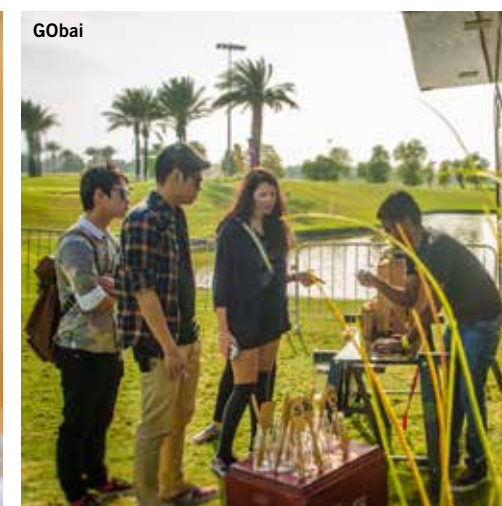
Dining in the sunshine at Salt



GObai



Cheesy at Salt



GObai

Like many other cities across the globe, Dubai has embraced the food truck trend. Some have ever-changing locations – follow them on Instagram to see where they'll be next – while others pop up regularly at markets such as Ripe and annual foodie events like the Dubai Food Festival, or even stay put in one place.

Gourmet burger van **Salt** has its silver Airstreams parked permanently at Kite Beach. Open from 11am to 2am, you'll find an alfresco seating area with umbrella-shaded tables alongside an air-conditioned glass cube. The menu features Wagyu beef and chicken Cheetos sliders (a nod to the locals' love of *Chips Oman*, a crushed chips, cheese and hot sauce sandwich), as well as the seriously addictive Lotus milkshake made with sweetly spiced Belgian biscuits.

Also housed in a 1960s Airstream, **Vida** is the much-loved casual eatery from the team at Vida Downtown Dubai hotel. It serves up street food favourites such as lamb sliders and fish tacos on Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Boulevard, daily from 11am to 11pm. On weekends – that's Friday and Saturday in Dubai – a second caravan sets up at The Terrace at the creek, a scenic new spot with knock-out views of the city skyline, from 10am to 10pm.

You can't miss the bright orange van of **Calle Tacos** tootling around the city, or parked up at Dubai Design District – known as d3 – every Tuesday from 11am to 5pm. The van takes its inspiration from LA's Mexican street food culture, serving tacos, nachos, burritos and quesadillas with homemade salsas. Be sure to leave room for the Nachos Nutella topped

with strawberries and cream.

Often spotted by Umm Suqeim beach next to Jumeirah Beach Hotel, **Jake's Burgers** serves up bagel burgers with Angus beef patties and toppings piled high. For something a little different, try the Shaka burger with dukkah spiced chicken and beetroot relish, or the Hang Ten chickpea and quinoa burger smothered in harissa sauce.

Meanwhile, newcomer **GObai** has already become a firm favourite at Ripe Market, thanks to its delicious fusion food inspired by Goa – try the Goan pao stuffed with pulled lamb. It's one of ten trucks pitching up at Emirates Golf Club for the new **Food Truck Brunch**, with unlimited food and house beverages, plus live music on the grass, every Saturday from 12pm-4pm during the cooler winter months.

Know before you go

FROM CLOTHING AND CURRENCY TO TAXIS AND TIPPING, HERE'S THE LOWDOWN ON DUBAI.

ARRIVING

Dubai is now home to two mega airports: Dubai International Airport, where most international flights land, and Dubai World Central - Al Maktoum International Airport. Australians get a 30-day visit visa on arrival where duty-free cigarettes, perfume and drink purchases are allowed (check these when you buy in Australia or Dubai). The easiest way to get into town is by cab, either a standard Dubai Taxi, or a Pink Taxi, driven by women and exclusively for female passengers.

GETTING AROUND

Pedestrianised areas and foot-paths are easy to navigate. If you'd prefer movement via wheels, taxis are plentiful and inexpensive. Flag one down on the street, or book via phone (+971 4 2080808) or the RTA Smart Taxi app (available on iTunes or Google Play; for standard taxis only). You'll also find luxury cars out the front of most five-star hotels, although these cost more than a standard or ladies' taxi. Alternatively, you could download the Uber app (uber.com/cities/dubai) and order a car.

Dubai has an excellent metro system too, which covers most of the city (including Dubai International Airport), and a tram system that connects Dubai Marina to the Al Sufouh area. You'll need to buy a Nol smartcard first (available at metro stations), which can be used on the metro, tram and bus network. All three have a separate section or carriage reserved just for women and families.



DINING OUT

Tipping etiquette

Leave 10-15 per cent in a restaurant (some add a service charge to the bill, so check first) and round up a taxi fare to the nearest note.

Drinking etiquette

There are many bars, restaurants and night clubs attached to hotels, where drinking is permitted. However, drinking in public city areas is punishable by law.

The legal age for drinking alcohol is 21 years in Dubai and the Northern Emirates (except Sharjah, where drinking alcohol is illegal).

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

The Emirate has a sub-tropical desert climate, which means blue skies and beach weather in winter (Dec-Jan) and warm and humid summers (Jun-Sept). The best time to visit is from October to April when temperatures are in the mid-20°Cs to low-30°Cs. July and August are the warmest months as the mercury rarely dips below 40°C, still the city accommodates this with several indoor attractions including aquariums,

THE LANGUAGE LOW-DOWN

English is so widely spoken that you won't get much of a chance to try Arabic.

ski slopes, plenty of family-friendly activities with four new theme-parks and a new Opera House opening in 2016.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Dubai weekend falls on Friday and Saturday

THE CURRENCY

The local currency is the dirham (Dhs or AED), which is divided into 100 fils.

DRESS CODE

Although Dubai is a cosmopolitan destination, it is a Muslim city, so respect the local culture by dressing modestly. Shorts and t-shirts are fine in many places, but short shorts, low-cut dresses and skimpy tops are not appropriate for public places such as the malls. Cover your shoulders and knees in more conservative areas like old Dubai (around Dubai Creek). If in doubt, take a pashmina. Showing a bit more skin in a bar is acceptable and wearing your swimmers on the beach and around the pool is perfectly fine.

SAFETY

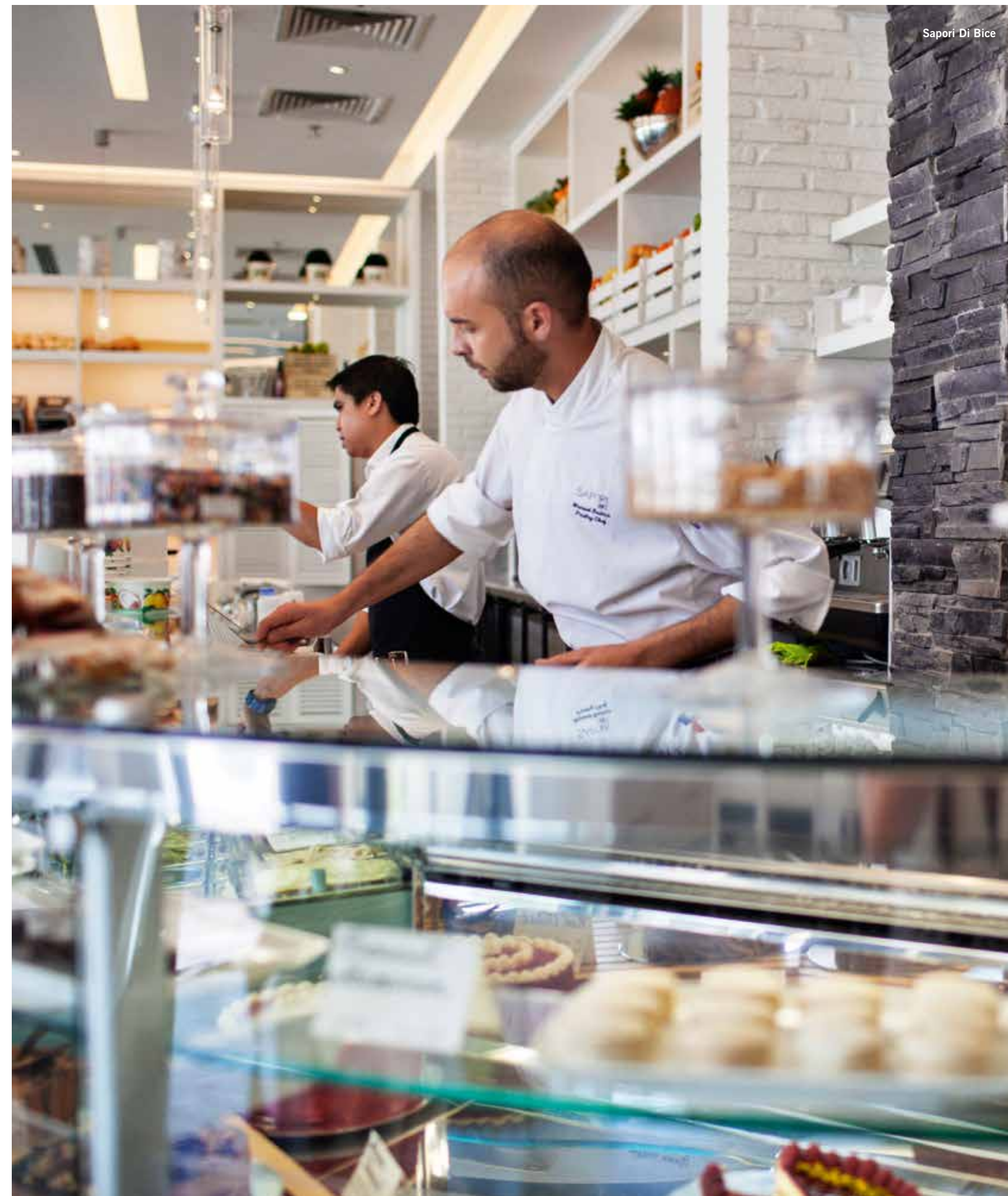
Dubai is safe compared with other large cities. Street crime is rare and walking around on your own is very safe.

SMARTPHONE & TECHNOLOGY

Buy a pre-paid local SIM card with a data package from mobile providers Etisalat or Du (you'll find stores in the airports and malls).

DID YOU KNOW?

Dubai is one of seven emirates that make up the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and is the second largest with a population of 2.46 million people.



LUXURY

Travel Flavours of Dubai



Gazebo dinner at Jumeirah Zabeel Saray

دبي