

## NEIGHBOURHOODS

### top picks

- Dubai Museum (p60)
- Burj Khalifa (p69)
- Deira Gold Souq (p51)
- Deira Spice Souq (p51)
- Bastakia Quarter (p61)
- Jumeirah Mosque (p75)
- Burj al-Arab (p79)
- Madinat Jumeirah (p79)

# 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 Dubai Mall does not count as sightseeing.

Dubai may be vast and amorphous but the areas of interest to visitors are actually fairly well defined. Not far from Dubai International Airport, the neighbourhoods of Deira and Bur Dubai make up historic Dubai. A pastiche of mosques and souqs, they flank the Creek, a 15km inlet, and remain the city's heart and soul. They offer something the mega-resorts and gleaming skyscrapers of the new city simply can't provide – real life.

The Creek is crossed by four bridges – Al-Garhoud, Al-Maktoum, Business Bay and the Floating Bridge – as well as Al-Shindagha Tunnel, open for vehicles and pedestrians. The new Dubai Metro also links the two banks. For all the billions spent on making Dubai the greatest show on earth, though, a five-minute, Dh1 ride on an *abra* (water taxi) is still the most atmospheric way to cross the Creek.

Dubai's main artery is Sheikh Zayed Rd, a super-busy highway that runs from the World Trade Centre Roundabout on the edge of Bur Dubai 55km south to Jebel Ali Port. In this chapter, the section called 'Sheikh Zayed Road' follows the highway as it cuts through the main business district around the World Trade Centre and Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC); the vibrant new Downtown Dubai area, home of Burj Khalifa; and industrial, art-gallery-filled Al-Quoz as far as Interchange No 4 near the Mall of the Emirates.

The area north of Sheikh Zayed Rd – called 'Jumeirah' in this book – covers a variety of distinct neighbourhoods. In the north, bordering Bur Dubai, is ageing but vibrant Satwa, which has great ethnic eateries and one of the city's most walkable streets, Al-Dhiyafah Rd. Next up is Jumeirah proper, known for its 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 a couple of blocks inland from the sea for about 16km past the iconic Burj al-Arab hotel as far as the sprawling Madinat Jumeirah development. Along the way, it takes in several subdivisions, such as the three Jumeirah areas (logically named Jumeirah 1, Jumeirah 2, Jumeirah 3) and Umm Suqeim (also 1, 2, 3).

The rest of the city is also its newest part, and therefore referred to as 'New Dubai' in this book. With the exception of a few hotels, everything around here has been built in the last five to 10 years. New Dubai encompasses coastal Al-Sufouh 1 and 2, home to royal palaces and luxury beach resorts; and high-rise-studded Dubai Marina, which has more fancy hotels; the Jumeirah Beach Residences (JBR); and the popular The Walk at JBR outdoor eating and shopping promenade. Jutting into the water is the Palm Jumeirah, capped by the gigantic Atlantis – The Palm hotel. The 'New Dubai' section in this chapter also covers the inland neighbourhood of Al-Barsha, which is bisected by the remaining stretch of Sheikh Zayed Rd linking the Mall of the Emirates with Jebel Ali via the Ibn Battuta Mall.

While Deira and Bur Dubai are best explored by foot, Jumeirah, Sheikh Zayed Rd and New Dubai are not particularly pedestrian-friendly. Dubai Metro runs along Sheikh Zayed Rd, but otherwise you'll have to rely on taxis (unless, of course, you have your own wheels). For orientation purposes, a spin around town with the Big Bus Company (p192) is recommended.

'Deira and Bur Dubai... offer something the mega-resorts and gleaming skyscrapers of the new city simply can't provide – real life'