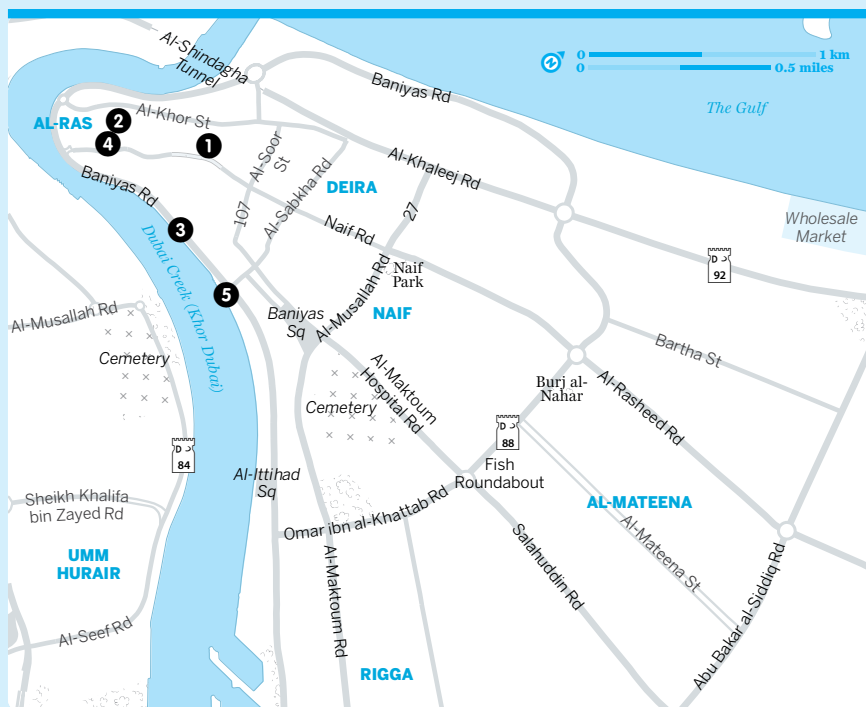


Deira

Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1 Taking in the **souqs** (p52): spicy aromas at the Spice Souq, glittering gold at the Gold Souq, pungent Arabian *attars* at the Perfume Souq and a glimpse of expat life at the Deira Covered Souq and the New Naif Market.
- 2 Enjoying an intriguing look at the culture and lifestyle of old Dubai at the **Heritage House** (p52).
- 3 Wondering at the timeless sight of loaded-up dhows at the **Dhow Wharfage** (p53).
- 4 Checking out Dubai's first school, **Al-Ahmadiya** (p53), housed in an exquisite traditional building.
- 5 Crossing the Creek in a traditional **abra** (p52), enjoying an atmospheric journey unchanged for decades.



Explore Deira

The most-historic part of Deira is near the mouth of the Creek in an area called Al-Ras. This is the site of the souqs and markets, and it's where traditional dhows unload their goods. Plan to spend a whole morning exploring the souqs (most are under cover) or, if it is in the height of summer, hit the area in the early evening. Many stalls will close for a few hours in the afternoon for prayer, lunch and rest and don't open on Fridays until late afternoon.

The Deira area is fascinatingly multicultural. The signs on shop windows change every 50m, from Tamil to Sinhalese, Malayalam, Urdu, Pashto, Tagalog and Amharic. But don't worry: everybody speaks a little English. Adventurous foodies can lap up authentic fare in the Syrian, Ethiopian, Iraqi and Afghan sections of Deira. If you're there at night, you'll find Russian, Filipino, Lebanese, Indian and Pakistani nightclubs, often all on the same floor and typically featuring ear-rupturing house bands, overpriced beers and, yes, plenty of illicit and seedy goings-on. But these dives are not without their charms; some of the best live music is there for the taking if you keep your ears, eyes and mind open.

Away from the souqs, south of Al-Maktoum Bridge, is Port Saeed which has pockets of interest, most notably the Deira City Centre Mall, the Dubai Creek Golf & Yacht Club and the adjacent Park Hyatt hotel. Away from the Creek are Dubai International Airport and such exotic neighbourhoods as Al-Mateena and Naif.

Local Life

➔ **Haggle** Enjoy bartering in the souqs. It's a favourite pastime of the locals here and, as long as you don't mind a bit of lighthearted confrontation, is good fun and generally rewarding.

➔ **Traditional coffee** Kick-start your day by ducking into one of the tucked-away cafes and having a shot of Arabic coffee.

➔ **Ethnic meals** Dine at one of the ethnic restaurants located in the Al Ras area – just follow your instincts and the hungry diners.

Getting There & Away

➔ **Metro** There are several convenient metro stations that connect the rest of the city with Deira. On the Red Line, there's Al Rigga, Union (at Union Sq) and Deira City Centre. On the Green Line, there's Al Ras, Palm Deira and Baniyas Sq.

➔ **Boat** The area is served by *abra* and water bus from Bur Dubai's Abra & Water Bus Station.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

One of the best buys at the Spice Souq is saffron, which is much cheaper here than in Europe or the USA. But do check the prices at several places as they can vary considerably. Also, don't forget that if you are making a purchase here, or at any of the souqs, you will probably have to pay in cash as credit cards are not widely accepted, so make sure you have plenty of small denomination notes and coins handy.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Traiteur (p54)
- ➔ Xiao Wei Yang (p54)
- ➔ Shabestan (p54)
- ➔ Miyako (p55)

For reviews, see p54 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Issimo (p57)
- ➔ Terrace (p57)
- ➔ QD's (p57)

For reviews, see p57 ➔

Best (non-souq) Places to Shop

- ➔ Deira City Centre (p58)
- ➔ Carrefour (p60)
- ➔ Al-Ghurair City (p58)
- ➔ Dubai Festival Centre (p61)
- ➔ Lush (p60)

For reviews, see p58 ➔