

# Downtown Dubai

DOWNTOWN DUBAI | FINANCIAL DISTRICT | AL QUOZ

## Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1 Craning your neck to take in the entire length of the elegantly tapered **Burj Khalifa** (p85), which pierces the sky at 828m, making it the world's tallest building. A superfast elevator drops you at observation platforms on the 124th and 148th levels.
- 2 Shopping at the mother of all malls: **Dubai Mall** (p97), with a record-breaking 1200 shops.
- 3 Keeping tabs on the latest in Middle Eastern art at the galleries in **Alserkal Avenue** (p92).
- 4 Spotting flamingos and migratory birds at **Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary** (p87).
- 5 Feeling hypnotised by the beautifully choreographed singing and dancing **Dubai Fountain** (p86).



For more detail of this area, see Map p258 and p260 ➔

## Lonely Planet's Top Tip

The trip to the world's highest observation platform in the world's tallest building – the Burj Khalifa – is one of the hottest tickets in town. Unless you fancy paying a premium for an on-the-spot fast-track ticket, book your preferred time slot online as early as possible to avoid disappointment, especially if you're in Dubai on a short stay.

### Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Thiptara (p93)
- ➔ Zaroob (p94)
- ➔ Clé Dubai (p94)
- ➔ Baker & Spice (p93)
- ➔ Tom & Serg (p95)

For reviews, see p92. ➔

### Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Calabar (p95)
- ➔ Cabana (p95)
- ➔ The Act (p96)
- ➔ Neos (p95)

For reviews, see p95. ➔

### Best Art Galleries

- ➔ Third Line (p89)
- ➔ Ayyam Gallery (p87)
- ➔ Empty Quarter (p87)
- ➔ Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde (p88)

For reviews, see p88. ➔

## Explore Downtown Dubai

Downtown Dubai is the city's vibrant urban hub and a key destination for visitors. Its literal pinnacle is the Burj Khalifa – the world's tallest building – which overlooks the Dubai Mall. The world's biggest shopping temple, it also teems with crowd-pleasing attractions, including a massive aquarium, an ice rink and a complete dinosaur skeleton. The mall flanks the Burj Lake where the mesmerising Dubai Fountain erupts in choreographed dance, music and light shows nightly. For front-row views, book a table at a restaurant in the mall, in the Arabian-themed Souk Al Bahar or at one of the five-star hotels ringing the lake. Still under construction is Downtown Dubai's 'Opera District' which will be anchored by a 2000-seat opera house.

Dubai's financial heart, meanwhile, beats north of Downtown along Sheikh Zayed Road, the city's main artery. Banks, investment companies and the stock exchange make their home at the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC). There's little reason to visit unless you're interested in architecture, in which case the Gate Building and the Jumeirah Emirates Towers (where Dubai's ruler Sheikh Mohammed keeps his offices) make appealing photo-ops. Art fans can scan the prestigious galleries at DIFC's Gate Village for the latest in Middle Eastern art.

To tap in to Dubai's underground art and creative scene, urban adventurers should follow Sheikh Zayed Road south west to the gritty, industrial district of Al Quoz. Some of its dusty warehouses now harbour cutting-edge galleries alongside an eclectic mix of design studios, magazine publishers, photography studios, hipster cafes, community theatre and other creative enterprises.

## Local Life

- ➔ **Mall crawling** To local families the mall is the de facto town plaza, especially on a Friday night. Join in: shop, relax in a cafe, grab an ice cream or catch a movie.
- ➔ **Business lunch** Head for the DIFC around lunchtime and take your pick of several excellent restaurants.
- ➔ **Showtime** Grab a post-dinner juice, coffee or ice cream and stake out your spot at the Burj Lake for front-row views of the Dubai Fountain.

## Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Metro** The Red Line runs the entire length of Sheikh Zayed Road. Major stations are Financial Centre, Emirates Towers, Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall, Noor Bank and First Gulf Bank.