

MY DUBAI

Ariana Bundy, celebrity chef and author of *Pomegranates & Roses: My Persian Family Recipes*, gives the lowdown on planning a tasteful trip to the emirate



1 The Dubai Fountain 2 Souk Madinat Jumeirah

I'm originally from Iran, but spent my childhood between New York, London and Paris. My travels brought me to Dubai four years ago and I've never looked back. I enjoy the emirate all year round and while the summer is incredibly hot, it's a peaceful time. That said, my favourite part of year is at the end of September when the climate is just right for outside activities.

At weekends I'm likely to be found spending time with my family. I make a hearty brunch at home and then we head to the private beach at Madinat Jumeirah, which is located on Jumeirah Beach Road. Afterwards we take a turn around Souk Madinat Jumeirah, which is a charming old-style souk with open-fronted shops. Surrounded by waterways, we like to board an abra (water taxi) and travel down the canal before having a drink in one of the resort restaurants. Madinat Jumeirah has been constructed to resemble a traditional Arabic village and it reminds me of an ancient city in Iran called Yazd. I enjoy all the little features such as the wind towers and the street lamps.

There are so many annual events in Dubai, but my favourite is the Dubai Polo Gold Cup Series, which takes place from

February to March. I was brought up watching polo and I enjoy the relaxed ambience of the sport. People dress up, but it's not over the top and it's a great way to mingle with family and friends. I also take pleasure in the International Fine Food Festival.

Dubai is a city that is known for its amazing restaurants. For something upmarket I recommend table9 by nick and scott, which is located at the Hilton Dubai Creek. Those with a penchant for fantastic French food will enjoy La Petite Maison at Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) while Zuma, also located at DIFC, is famed for its fantastic sushi and signature dishes such as black cod. Casual diners should try Social House at The Dubai Mall, where they serve delicious Vietnamese spring rolls.

When I have friends to stay I take them for a stroll around the Bastakiya quarter, which is located in 'old' Dubai. Abundant with galleries, souks and with views of the Dubai Creek, this bustling area is the city's oldest and most charming district. Afterwards it's nice to watch The Dubai Fountain at Downtown Dubai. With 500-foot water bursts, stirring music and a dramatic light-show, this is a must-see for all Dubai visitors.

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