



FOOD

Glorious Food

Dubai is renowned for its outstanding food scene.
But to truly discover the soul of this extraordinary emirate,
we take you on a whistle-stop tour around the city, off the beaten track,
to unearth a diversity of authentic cuisine from around the region.

BY DANIELLE SIMPSON | PHOTOGRAPHY BY NOEL MILLER



A stone's throw from what has been described as the world's most luxurious hotel Burj Al Arab, is one of Dubai's most modest eateries - Bu Qtair. Located in a Portakabin, it's hard to imagine more of a contrast, but for the freshest local fish, this is a consistent favourite. Choose from the catch of the day, watch it being grilled and hunker down with everyone else round a communal table by the beach. For something a little more substantial, try the ultimate Lebanese sandwich at Kaak ya Kaak. Kaak is Arabic for 'cake', or, in this case, savoury bread topped with sesame seeds; comfort food at its best. For an altogether more surreal experience, because driving through the desert into an area of landscaped lakes, waterways and botanical gardens is a little bit weird, a road trip out to The Farm is an enjoyable way to see a bit more of Dubai and its surroundings, with some delicious food at the end of it.

Al Wasl Road and Jumeirah Beach Road are home to a multitude of interesting little cafés, juice bars and restaurants. For a back-to-basics experience, Al Reef Lebanese Bakery's freshly baked steaming cheese bread, crammed with a mouth-watering vegetable mix of tomatoes, onions and olives is unmissable. Stock up on the Arabic style doughnuts and sticky sweets for a naughty but nice dessert!

A bit of an institution with Dubai's 80s youth, Al Ijaza Cafeteria had its 15 minutes of fame in the 2009 movie 'City of Life' when one of the main characters stops by and orders himself a juice. Another similarly popular restaurant is the very lively Reem Al Bawadi, always packed with a young Dubai crowd. The food is tasty, with generous portions; the outdoor terrace where you can



smoke shisha is always full. Inside, people play cards and backgammon. Try Samad Al Iraqi for mouthwatering fish dishes.

In Satwa a visit to Ravi's is a must, for tasty Pakistani food, while one of Dubai's best Lebanese cafés is Al Mallah - a pavement seat on Diyafah Street will give you an eyeful of action as you stave off your hunger with mixed grills, washed down with refreshing fresh juices at budget prices. Karama may be popular for its crammed souvenir shops, but it is the proliferation of simple Indian, Sri Lankan, Pakistani and Filipino cafés and restaurants that are well worth the visit. In no particular order try Al Damyati - for the best falafel in town, Abu Al

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Abbas Restaurant – for some amazing Sudanese home cooking and Calicut Paragon for Keralan cooking to tickle the tastebuds

Deira and the Souks offer authentic Middle Eastern and Asian cooking. Considered by some to be the best juice bar in Dubai, Jafer Birman Ali Cafeteria in the Spice Souk has been in existence for decades and is particularly famous for its fresh juices. Al Bayt Al Baghdadi Restaurant is a no-frills eatery offering good Arabic home-cooking. An Ethiopian eatery full of Ethiopian and Sudanese customers is a good sign that the food is going to be authentic and this is what you'll find at Jimma Café. For excellent Pakistani food Karachi Darbar won't disappoint – especially the chicken or mutton biryani, whilst Habiba Al Nabulsi will impress with not only its huge trays of piping-hot kanafa - gooey cheese, honey and pistachio nuts but also its simple, well cooked traditional dishes.

Part of Al Fahidi Cultural District's charm is its delightful courtyard cafés. Arabian Tea House serves wonderfully large bowls of delicious salads and hot bites too, washed down with thirst-quenching juices. Drop into Local House for camel burgers and camel milk fried ice-cream, amongst other more traditional Emirati dishes, in a shady traditional setting. The location is stunning at Bait Al Wakeel, built on stilts over the Creek and if you're visiting Heritage Village, stop at Kan Zama by the Creek and enjoy traditional Arabic mezzes. Finally, family-run Special Ostadi brims with character, offering friendly service, simple but delicious kebabs and fascinating decor wherever you look.

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