

Entrée: Dubai

A mega city rising from the desert, Dubai has quickly established itself as a global hot spot and its luxury restaurants are already turning heads.

Buddha Bar, Grosvenor House, Sheikh Zayed Road (buddha-bar.com)

You'd be forgiven for feeling a touch self-important as you're ushered along the red carpet into Dubai's swankiest bar cum restaurant. The people who frequent this Parisian export aren't so much here to see, but to be seen. Dominated by a five-metre Buddha, the interior is as dark and mysterious as the stranger in the corner, who'll inevitably buy you an overpriced cocktail. Renowned for its sushi, Buddha Bar's snazzy dishes come fresh and have as much glamour as the girls on the surrounding tables. Wallet-busting, but wonderful.

Fire & Ice – Cellar and Grill, Raffles Dubai (raffles.com)

Liquid nitrogen is the dish of the day at Dubai's most recent contender in the best restaurant rankings. It sits atop the tomato gazpacho like a curious mist in a fairy story. Fire & Ice is a dramatic dining experience. Its wagyu beef tenderloin had everyone talking earlier this year, and its black truffle mashed potato is worth a column on its own. With

stunning, crystal surroundings, you're swept into a Raffles fantasy land. True, Dubai razzle dazzle.

Barasti Bar, Le Meridien Mina Seyahi Beach Resort & Marina, (starwoodhotels.com)

It's impossible to arrive in Dubai without somebody offering their eatery-based expertise. Barasti is what they'll whisper. In the cooler months, this beachside bar and restaurant is constantly bustling with tourists, locals and expats alike. A live musician strums his guitar when the DJ's not spinning and smiling waiters in Hawaiian shirts serve a limited choice of burgers, salads and international dishes, albeit to five star hotel standards. Friends smoke shisha, gazing out at the sea, and the beach-bound security guards are more than ready to run should anyone attempt that midnight swim.

Vu's, Jumeirah Emirates Towers, Sheikh Zayed Road (jumeirahemiratestowers.com)

Although soon to be overshadowed by the Burj Dubai, the Emirates Towers will no doubt retain their smooth sophistication, helped by Vu's (top right), a stunning restaurant on the 50th floor. Your ears will pop as you arrive via the lift and your eyes might well do the same once you see the view. From neon lights to desert dunes, Dubai in



all its growing glory sprawls beneath you. But you'll need to focus on the mammoth menu, too. The service is excellent – attentive waiters help you select your meal. Veal steaks, shellfish and heavenly foie gras complement that incredible, panoramic view. Pricy, but well worth a look.

Butcher Shop & Grill, Mall of the Emirates, (malloftheemirates.com)

Despite being in a shopping mall (like much of Dubai), this is the perfect place for the ravenous carnivore. Once you're tucking into that succulent sirloin, accompanied by smooth, garlic mash and a side of juicy giant mushrooms in blue cheese sauce, you won't notice the shoppers frowning at the blood dripping down your T-shirt. This South African affair is also a butcher's shop (hence the name), so take away an ostrich steak, or some chicken livers for later.

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