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HONEYMOON IN DUBAI

When Charles Duncombe owner of UK holiday company, HolidaysPlease, decided to go on honeymoon he wanted to make sure a trip to Dubai was on the itinerary.

I knew that choosing our honeymoon was going to be an important decision. Get it wrong and you are putting your marriage to the test straight away. Get it right and you are in the good books for years to come!

Being in the travel industry I knew that Dubai would offer a great mix of relaxation, culture and adventure. It would also be easy for us to reach with direct flights from Birmingham. As well as being a great destination in its own right, Dubai is also a fantastic stopover if you want to fly out to the Indian Ocean, Africa and the Far East.

Downtown Dubai

As soon as we landed at Dubai airport we were struck by the size of the entrance hall with clean, pristine glass and marble everywhere. There were sheikhs all around us dressed in their traditional kandura and ghutra outfits. I felt like I was a prince entering a palace! We made our way through customs to the Emirates desk where we got a chauffeur transfer to the hotel.

We were soon driving through downtown Dubai which is surrounded by glass-encased skyscrapers. I was amazed at how modern the city was and imagined that behind every bit of glass there was a businessmen concluding a multi-million dollar oil contract. If you wanted a modern day setting for popular US soap opera Dallas, then this would certainly be it!



We then arrived at the 5 star Westin Hotel and entered the lobby. There was a huge atrium with the biggest chandelier that you could ever imagine extending five floors down from the ceiling. To change a light bulb on that chandelier you would need to be a mountaineer as much as an electrician.

We soon checked in and were taken to our luxury suite which had 6 rooms including reception, lounge, bedroom, bathroom, dressing room and a guest bathroom. Very quickly I realised that the suite had the same number of rooms as my flat back home in England!



Dubai Creek

The hotel itself is located next to the sea which was like walking into a hot bath! You can also enjoy a long pool that extends through the grounds. It's quite surreal to swim through the gardens and be looking up at the trees and bushes. One thing I really enjoyed was the hotel's lunch buffet where you could choose from half a dozen different types of delicious food including western, Indian, oriental and Middle Eastern.

In the evening we went on a romantic sunset cruise on Dubai creek in a modern dhow. This was a fantastic trip where for a couple of hours you could see traditional architectural mosques on one side and modern high-rise skyscrapers on the other. We also enjoyed a lovely dinner buffet on board with the mandatory mint tea as a welcome accompaniment.



Dune Buggy Driving

The next day we got picked up and went dune buggy driving in the desert. Here we were taken in a white 4x4 and were driven up and down the dunes at hair-raising speeds. Usually on roads, the larger the bumps the slower you go. The opposite seemed to apply to sand dunes. The larger they are the more they seem to encourage the driver to put his foot to the floor! The 4x4 went over the dunes at such an impossible angle that if the surface had been less forgiving then the jeep would have definitely rolled over. But as it was, the jeep just slid down gracefully and prepared itself for the next one.

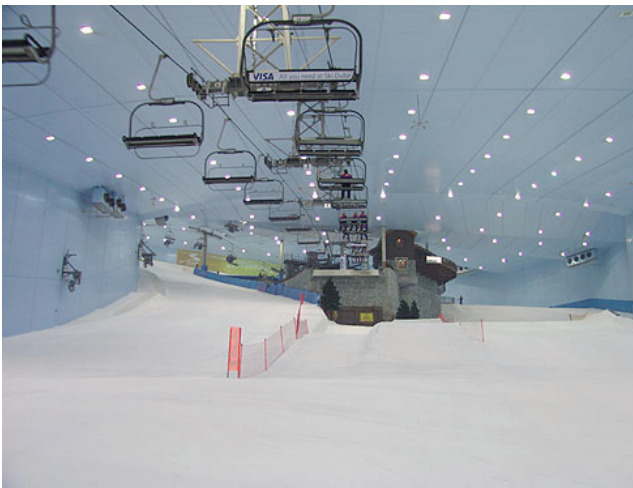


We then went on to explore the desert where we found an old fort. Here we enjoyed an authentic barbecue dinner whilst sitting cross-legged on rugs and watching a pretty energetic belly dancer. At the back of the fort there were some snow boards, which you could use to ride down the big sand dunes. I managed to ride down one of the dunes without falling off my snow board. This was probably because I didn't manage to get beyond walking speed! The night then drew to an end and it was time to head back in the dune buggy. If you thought going in a dune buggy was scary during the day, you should try doing it in the dark!

Burj Khalifa

The next day we decided to do some sightseeing in Dubai where we visited the world's tallest building, the Burj Khalifa. We went up in the elevator which rockets at 10 metres per second up to the observation deck on level 124. Once at the top the view was amazing. It was fascinating seeing how modern day Dubai has sprung up from complete desert. As the weather in Dubai is always hot, the view was clear and we could see for miles.

Our next stop was the Atlantis Palm where we explored the mysterious ruins of Atlantis and discovered 65,000 sea creatures in their massive aquarium. They also have rooms where one of the walls is a full floor to ceiling glassed wall into the atrium. If you've ever wanted to wake up next to a shark then here's your opportunity!



Ski Dubai

We also did some skiing at the Ski Dubai, the first indoor ski resort in the Middle East. My wife wasn't sure as to whether she had brought her 'ski legs' with her. So whilst I spent time going up and down the ski slopes, she spent time going round and round on the ski lift and shouting down words of encouragement as I skied!

It was a fantastic trip with so many things to see and do. Dubai makes a great destination whether it's a final destination for your honeymoon or a stopover before flying elsewhere.

Charles Duncombe is a Director of UK holiday company Holidays please which sells Dubai holidays, and Dubai Hotels including The Westin Dubai.