



BOARDROOM

THE BEST RESOURCE FOR ASSOCIATIONS

DUBAI
ENTERING A NEW ERA

— DECEMBER 2022 —

Contents



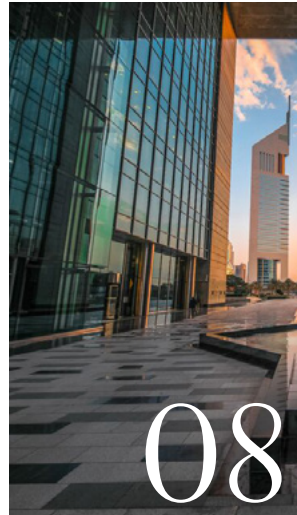
04

LOOKING BEYOND
THE FUTURE



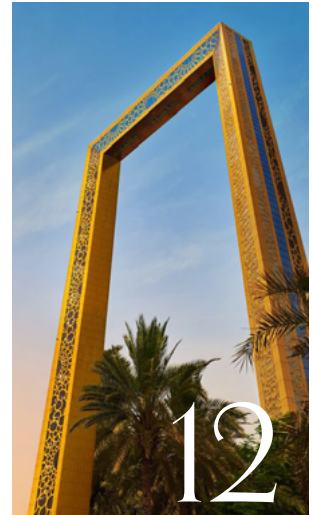
06

PORTRAIT OF AN AMBASSADOR
DR. AMMAR ALBANNA



08

BUSINESS EVENTS ELEVATED BY
AMBITIOUS INFRASTRUCTURE



12

A CULTURAL CAPITAL
IN THE MAKING



BOARDROOM

THE BEST RESOURCE FOR ASSOCIATIONS

Boardroom \ The Best Resource for Associations

Address

Avenue des Volontaires 19 - 1160 Brussels - Belgium
info@boardroom.global \ www.boardroom.global
T. +32 2 743 47 20

Founder & Managing Partner

Cécile Koch \ cecile@boardroom.global
T. +32 487 17 70 25

Founder & Chief Editor

Rémi Dévé \ editor@boardroom.global
T. +32 487 17 70 73

Design

Paf! \ pafdesign.be \ info@pafdesign.be
T. +32 2 743 47 28

Editors

Remi Deve / Vicky Koffa / Lane Nieset

Responsible Publisher

KODE Publishing

This supplement is a product of Boardroom. The right to use it, in parts or in full, has to be granted by the Publisher.

FOREWORD

More Than you Know in Dubai

What are associations looking for and expecting when selecting a destination for their events? It's something that CVBs such as Dubai Business Events spend plenty of time considering and reaching out to planners to understand, in an ever-changing environment.

Of course, the core business events and tourism offerings are critical. No one would consider a host city if there wasn't strong connectivity to the rest of the world, as we have through Dubai International Airport, or an ever-growing suite of hotels and attractions, which continue to open up to visitors across all price points throughout Dubai - see page 8 for more details.

But we all understand that it has to be about much more than this - and especially in this post-pandemic age we live in. The conversations we are having with the association community are reinforcing what we have long known about the need for a well-rounded destination that can give back to associations and their delegates just as much as destinations are receiving through economic impact and knowledge transfer when hosting events.

A focus on innovation and a commitment to building a knowledge hub is certainly one aspect. Going beyond just talk about diversification and actually leading the way in the sectors of the future such as AI, robotics and the metaverse (see page 4). And taking action on sustainability by becoming home to the largest single site solar park in the world.

And more than just a list of achievements, having a community of experts and leaders passionate about their respective fields, ready and willing to work with their peers internationally and providing a resource that they can tap into for their events ensuring long-term impact for the destination and the wider community.

And beyond the compelling content in the halls of convention centres, or the comfort found in the diverse range of hotels, or ease of access through a world-class airline, what about the impression the rest of the city leaves?

How about a rich heritage waiting to be discovered by visiting historic districts and meeting locals who can explain the traditions and culture of the city? (see page 12) Or perhaps trying the food that reflects the melting pot of hundreds of nationalities that call the city home?

If all of that can be delivered, then we're talking about a destination that really can offer everything associations and their delegates are looking for.

Over the following pages, I hope you get a better understanding of how Dubai is that destination.



Steen Jakobsen

Associate Vice President / Dubai Business Events

Looking Beyond the Future

Today – and it might be a not so well-known fact – less than 1% of Dubai’s GDP comes from its oil and gas production. Thanks to visionary leadership, the Emirate has indeed been sustaining its future by transitioning to a knowledge-based economy welcoming innovation, creativity and expertise in every area of endeavour. Associations – and association conferences – are an integral part of this long-term strategy.

Part of a nation only formed in 1971, Dubai has developed at breakneck speed over recent decades to become a major international business and tourism hub, with an income per capita comparable with that of most industrialized nations. And while strong economic growth continues to be driven by sectors such as trade, logistics and manufacturing, there is a strong drive to continue its diversification into more knowledge-based industries.

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

Having faith in the fact that nothing is impossible for the piece of land that his city occupies, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, has adopted long-term innovation strategies and invested heavily in government initiatives in order to create a city that thinks outside the box and that can become a city of the future.

The aim is for the Emirate to develop wider, more diversified economic bedrock to power growth. Thanks to the culture of strong collaborations between the public and private sectors, and a clear vision of which direction the city should go, Dubai has built a well-earned reputation as a go-to knowledge hub, where innovation has gone through all segments of society with remarkable results.

Already a well-established hub for business and tourism, Dubai now excels in a wealth of technological and humanistic advancements. From artificial intelligence (AI) to robotics, and from blockchain technology to sustainable developments which seek to safeguard the future of our planet, Dubai is leading the way in a number of industries. Dubai has also recently launched the Dubai Research and Development Programme to create new economic opportunities and support strategic sectors in the emirate.

Dubai Internet City, the region’s leading tech hub, Dubai Media City, the

regional centre for media companies, and Dubai Knowledge Village, a human resources, professional learning and educational free zone, are all testament to the destination’s forward-looking mindset. There is also the aptly named Dubai Future Foundation, which houses a number of incubators where a variety of technological advances in the field of robotics, virtual reality and healthcare are being designed and tested, all with a focus on creating a more sustainable future.

PROGRESS UNDERWAY

If innovation has always been at work in Dubai, the Dubai Association Centre (DAC) is another good example of the progress underway. Offering assistance for the establishment of international non-profit, professional associations and trade bodies in Dubai, DAC acts as a formal environment where associations can form a membership-based community or open a regional representative office to conduct business in the UAE and around the globe. So far, it has proved to be quite successful.



with more than 75 licensed associations as of November 2022 - an increase that didn't stop during the pandemic.

Steen Jakobsen, associate vice president at Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism (DET), explains: "Dubai has ambitious plans to establish itself as a leader in key sectors - especially in the ones that will shape our future and experience the most innovation over the coming years. DAC has a vital role to play in this, ensuring the city is directly connected to global networks of experts and changemakers, and bringing higher levels of professionalism."

Echoing Steen's comment, Bettina Smith, Operations Manager, Direct Selling Association of UAE, says: "For our association and industry Dubai is a gateway, a bridge to

the wider region of Middle East, North Africa and South Asia. We have come to recognize that we are privileged to be in a region that just continues to see economic growth and being based here in Dubai gives us the ability to access all the regions and to be made aware of changes taking place across the region, not just here in Dubai."

FRONT OF MIND

As the number one destination in the Middle East for business events, factors such as connectivity, diversity in the hotel sector, a robust variety of venues, and a wealth of activities and experiences have helped to put Dubai at front of mind for association planners.

Yet associations are increasingly looking for more than just proof points for these important hygiene factors. Beyond understanding that a destination is simply capable of hosting an event, you want to know how you can tap into knowledge in these cities; what it means for you as organizations and your future growth; and what kinds of legacies the events can create for everyone involved.

As the Middle East's fastest-growing and most dynamic cosmopolitan city, well-known for its liberal outlook and commitment to free trade, Dubai, with its wealth of expertise, can help you just do that.

Portrait of an Ambassador

Dr. Ammar Albanna

Founding president of the Emirates Society for Child & Adolescent Mental Health, Dr. Ammar Albanna was instrumental in bringing the 25th World Congress of the International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions 2022 (IACAPAP) to Dubai. It was actually the first time that IACAPAP convened to the Gulf region. For Boardroom, Dr. Albanna explains why the topic of mental health has never been so important and how he sees his role as an ambassador for the destination.

Taking place 5-9 December 2022 at the Dubai World Trade Centre, the congress discussed extremely important and timely child and adolescent mental health topics: as the world is slowly emerging out of the pandemic and facing challenges like climate change, this is causing significant distress especially on vulnerable populations such as children. In this regard, IACAPAP 2022 served as a global platform for scientists and clinicians from all over the world to present their work and discuss the latest advances under the theme of 'Child and Adolescent Mental Health: Shaping the Future'.

A Canadian-trained consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist recognized for his clinical research and educational work, Dr. Ammar was the Congress Chair of IACAPAP 2022 and Head of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Centre at Al Jalila Children's Specialty Hospital in Dubai. His current research focuses on neuropsychiatric disorder in the UAE, including autism spectrum disorder.

SUPPORT MECHANISM

An active member of the Al Safer Conference Ambassador Programme, which Dubai Business Events (DBE) set up as a support mechanism to enable individuals to host high-profile international conferences in Dubai, Dr. Ammar recognizes the value of medical congresses as platforms for knowledge dissemination, peer-to-peer exchange, and capacity-building.

"Shedding the light on a specific field locally is very important," he explains. "Conferences are big opportunities to bring the attention of the media, the profession and decision-makers to the advances that are being made in, in our case, in the mental health of children. But we can't do this alone. For advances to take place, we need to collaborate. And collaborations happen when people meet in person. One of the major impacts that conferences have actually comes after the event itself in terms of building networks, collaborating to enhance clinical services, legislations research, etc. Medical conferences of course



also help build local capacity as they provide opportunities to train people on the ground.”

On an international level, it increases the reputation of Dubai - and the UAE - as a hub for medical conferences. *“I think there is an important trickle effect here,”* says Dr. Ammar. *“Once you have successfully hosted a conference, people will see how strong you are compared to other destinations and that you can bring people in numbers easily, because you have strong scientific program. There might be a snowballing effect to attract other - bigger? - conferences, because you’re standing on solid grounds, having showcased that the destination can deliver.”*

The race to win the right to host an international conference can get very competitive. In that regard, Dubai Business Events provided Dr. Ammar with a wealth of resources to make sure the candidacy was strong.

“Dubai has definitely a lot of strengths, but the UAE is also a relatively young country,” says Dr. Ammar. *“In that regard, it’s been really helpful to have DBE support in terms of positioning why we should do the conference in Dubai. As a clinician, scientist, and researcher in the field child mental health, I didn’t have all the tools to create a winning bid. DBE made sure I got all that. Their help, especially in the pre-bid phase, was precious: they got everybody aligned, from the government to the airlines, very quickly.”*



HYGIENE FACTORS

According to Dr. Ammar, what also made a difference are all those hygiene factors that sometimes people take for granted but that Dubai boasts in great numbers and quality. In short, Dubai gets the basics right, like no other.

“I think about 90% of the world population can come to Dubai within a limited

number of hours, mostly even on a single flight without a connection. This is a big selling factor for conferences because when people travel they want to do it as smoothly as possible. And when they are on site, they expect the kind of infrastructure only Dubai has, not only in terms of hotels and accommodation but also in terms of conference facilities, offsite venues and pre- and post-congress tour options,” argues Dr. Ammar.

Technology-wise, Dubai is also the place to be, and this was a decisive factor for IACAPAP. *“Dubai doesn’t have a long history of mental health services as other Western countries. However, we are very strong technologically, and we’re sometimes seen as the Silicon Valley of the region. This is quite important because the theme we selected for the Congress is ‘Shaping the future of Child and Adolescent Mental Health’ utilizing these technologies. There is actually no better place than Dubai to push the field forward - not only in the destination itself, but across the whole region,”* Dr. Ammar concludes.

Business Events Elevated by Ambitious Infrastructure

The city with endless ideas and ambition, where sky-high buildings and luxurious constructions are common, could not lag behind when it comes to purpose-built facilities for the organization of meetings, exhibitions, and conferences. New venues join pre-existing ones in hosting everything from the smallest meeting to the largest exhibition, and new hotels are constantly popping up to meet the need for accommodation these gatherings create. What's more, all this building growth follows a well-curated urban master plan which ensures Dubai's smooth development.



NEW EYE-CATCHING HOTELS

The recently opened (end of summer 2022) Hilton Dubai Palm Jumeirah has given a boost to the city's accommodation and meeting offerings. Located in the man-made Palm Jumeirah Island, just off the coast of the city, the new beachfront hotel offers 608 rooms of different categories with ocean or city view. Many of the rooms (like most of the hotel's facilities) are well equipped to welcome guests with disabilities.

Accessible in about 20 minutes by taxi from the centre of Dubai, the hotel offers a more scenic alternative for business events. 12 meeting rooms ranging from 35 to 440 persons capacity (in theatre style), a divisible ballroom, and a terrace with panoramic ocean views that can host up to 800 people provide ample space for all meetings. The rooms are equipped with state-of-the-art A/V support, multilingual staff and expert planners who can guide and cater for interested visitors.

Situated just 30 minutes from Dubai International Airport (DXB) and by Dubai Harbour, the W Dubai - Mina Seyahi is one of the city's latest iconic glass towers. A total space of 560 sqm has been devoted to hosting meetings with 2 breakout rooms and 4 event rooms, the biggest of which can hold up to 150 people. Opened earlier this year, the hotel is designed with Dubai as its inspiration, depicting traditional Middle Eastern souqs. It offers 318 sea-facing rooms and suites and has become an ideal destination for small-scale meetings.

Set to open in 2023 (with reservations already available), Atlantis The Royal Dubai aspires to bring extra luxury to the already high standards of the Dubai hotelier scene. The resort is located on the crescent of the Palm Island, next to the iconic Atlantis The Palm, and is a 35-minute drive from Dubai International Airport (DXB). Reaching up to 43 floors with 795 rooms of different sizes



EMIRATES TOWERS

in total, the resort promises unparalleled views of the Arabian Sea, personalized comfort and an overall design crafted by experts in delivering quality products.

With a commitment to sustainable practices, the hotel is part of the Atlantis Atlas Project. The initiative invests in Responsible Operations, Conservation and Animal Welfare, Education and Awareness, and Corporate Social Responsibility, including an on-site water purification and bottling plant, locally sourced dishes, and support to four universities and non-profit organizations to drive local marine conservation initiatives.

UNIQUE AND PURPOSE-MADE VENUES

When Expo 2020 started shaping up as an idea in Dubai, the need for an exhibition centre within the premises was evident. The Dubai Exhibition Centre (DEC) was opened on the occasion of the city's greatest event to offer the business events industry an innovative state-of-the-art place where any event is welcome and

unique. It is considered part of the lasting legacy created by Expo 2020. The venue has already hosted major association events like the esteemed Dubai Association Conference.

Located just 300 metres from the heart of what is now known as Expo City Dubai (and a 45-minute drive from the airport), DEC is adjacent Dubai Metro Route 2020 and connects visitors directly to a number of hotel and hospitality options, all within 15 minutes. Its 45,000 sqm of event space is separated in two high-ceiling areas. The North Complex offers two conference rooms (each can host more than 1,800 people) and a completely reconfigurable auditorium (for 200 to 2,000 people). The larger South Complex can be divided into nine halls and can host anywhere from 300 to 20,000 guests.

Holding up to 4,000 people for any event, the Grand Hyatt Dubai Conference and Exhibition Centre was delivered earlier this year with a view to upscaling the city's dedicated business events venue offerings. Its 5,000 sqm of multi-purpose facilities include 3,000



DUBAI EXHIBITION CENTRE

sqm of open function space, 12-metre ceiling height, a 600 sqm royal arrival hall, and a VIP majlis entrance. Its central location and the fact that it provides direct access to the well-established hotel and to other ballrooms makes the venue a go-to solution if there is the desire to organize an event in town.

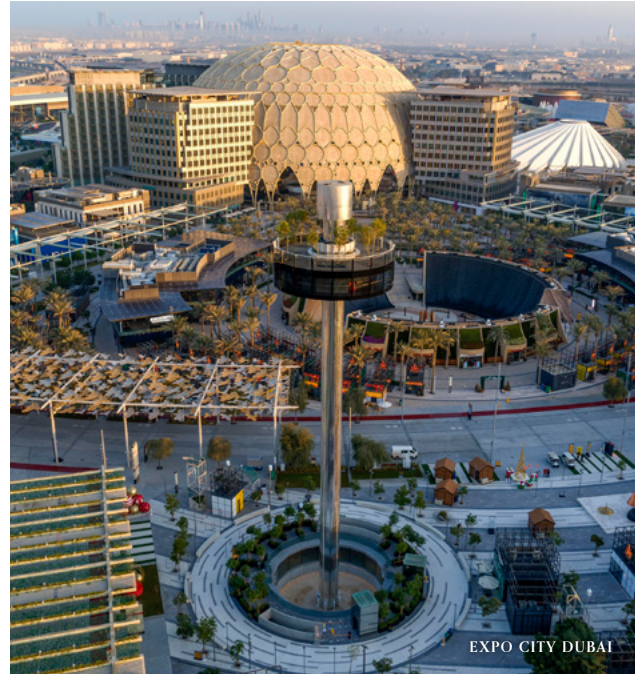
These two purpose-built venues came to join older but not lesser options in Dubai. The World Trade Centre (122,000 sqm of indoor space) is home to the city's major exhibitions and trade shows, including Gitex Technology Week, and regularly hosts international conferences and congresses. The Madinat Jumeirah Conference Centre features a number of ballrooms and flexible indoor and outdoor meeting spaces, including the Madinat Arena, which has capacity for up to 4,500 people.

The Intercontinental Dubai Festival City (just a 10-minute taxi ride from the airport) boasts 4,250 sqm of events space and access to other conference hotels within the same complex, including the InterContinental Residence Suites Dubai Festival City, the Crowne Plaza Festival City and Holiday Inn Dubai Festival City. Habtoor City (a complex of three hotels - Hilton Dubai Al Habtoor City, V Hotel Dubai and Habtoor Palace) and Atlantis The Palm are all ready and fully equipped to receive business events.

NOTHING LEFT UNPLANNED

The growth of construction in the hospitality and business events sectors falls under the Dubai 2040 Urban Master Plan. The initiative was launched last year by Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum with the vision to make Dubai the city with the world's best quality of life from a leisure and working perspective in the next 20 years. Based on inclusivity, environmental sustainability and economic growth, the plan puts people's needs as a first priority.

Main component of this urban development is the balance created by combining community building with tourism development and modernization with cultural and natural preservation. One of the plan's key goals is the *"development and investment in five main urban centres (three existing and two new centres one of which is Expo City) that support growth of economic sectors and increased job opportunities for its diverse population, in addition to providing a wide range of lifestyle facilities that cater to the needs of all sections of the population."*



Access to transport (55% of the population will live within 800 metres of a main public transport station) and improvement of the movement of pedestrians, bicycles, and sustainable mobility means Dubai will be an interconnected city. Green and recreational spaces are set to double in size, with nature covering 60% of the emirate's total land. With a clear goal to attract more tourism, beaches will increase by 400%, while the land area used for hotels and tourist activities will increase by 134%.

A comprehensive legislation and planning governance model is also part of the physical plan with laws to attract and facilitate foreign investment in new sectors. New laws are also meant to safeguard the city's heritage and natural resources. The latter will actually be enhanced in order to support sustainability, including through the construction of a new sustainable hydro-electric power plant in the mountain exclave Hatta.

A Cultural Capital in the Making

In the past half-century, Dubai has transformed itself from a trade city reliant on fishing and pearl diving into a cosmopolitan metropolis with culture as rich as some of the world's top art capitals. Today, the city is home to award-winning galleries, creative hubs, street art and even its own design district. Museums not only share stories of Dubai's past, they also look to inspire its future — and that of a new generation of artists and creatives who continue to fuel the city's rapidly growing arts and culture scene.



TASTE OF HISTORY

Groups visiting Dubai can start right at the city's source, the historic Dubai Creek, by spending time at Al Shindagha Museum, which sits along the historic Dubai Creek. The museum explores the innovation, resilience and desire for progress that shaped the city into what it is today, while showcasing Emirati culture and its origins. Through interactive videos, touch displays, photographs and artifacts, visitors get a glimpse of what it was like for Emiratis to live by the waterways and live off of maritime trade.

The museum also incorporates a state-of-the-art multimedia experience dubbed "Dubai Creek: Birth of a City," which gives an even deeper dive into the dramatic development that's taken place in Dubai over the centuries. Groups can get an authentic taste of historic Dubai in the surrounding neighbourhood, Al Shindagha, one of the city's oldest.

For another look at Old Dubai, Al Fahidi Historical Neighbourhood, along the Dubai Creek, shows a snapshot of



what the city was like in the mid-19th century. The heritage site still features original infrastructure – much of which is preserved and intact – like traditional wind towers constructed from sandstone, teak, gypsum, palm wood and sandalwood. While strolling the twisting alleys and paths on a historical walking tour, groups can take a seat at Arabian Tea House and sample authentic Emirati cuisine like regag bread, which is drizzled with honey and stuffed with egg and cheese, and khabisah, a blend of sautéed flour and molasses, while sipping traditional Arabic coffee.

While there are more than 50 "homes" to explore, one groups should add to their itinerary is the Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Centre for Cultural Understanding (SMCCU). Since 1998, this institution has been helping visitors get a better understanding of the United Arab Emirates' culture and customs. Set inside a restored wind tower house, the centre is outfitted in Bedouin-style carpets and pillows and offers the chance for guests to ask questions about life in the emirate over an authentic breakfast, lunch or dinner.

A few other highlights: the Coins Museum, where more than 470 rare coins are on display; the Symposium House and Events House, which often hosts demonstrations by local craftsmen; and the Municipality House, one of the best examples of traditional Dubai architecture.

ART WALK

Dubai is stepping up as a serious contender on the global art scene – and this movement has been underway for some time now. In 2008, Alserkal Avenue was established with just 20 art galleries in a small block of warehouse spaces. That's since expanded into a 46,450-sqm urban hub with food, fashion, music and cultural events. Inspired by Shoreditch in London and Manhattan's Meatpacking District, Alserkal Avenue was designed to start conversations in the region and create a platform for creatives to meet and share ideas in Dubai, a similar idea to Dubai serving as a meeting ground for associations coming from around the world to exchange knowledge.

The avenue is now home to more than 70 concepts, including permanent art spaces like Concrete, the first building in the UAE designed by renowned Dutch architectural firm OMA. At Leila Heller Gallery, the first international contemporary gallery in the district, contemporary artists from the Middle East and Asia are highlighted, while calligraphist artist eL Seed – who helped boost street art's popularity in Dubai – has a studio tucked inside concept shop The Edit.

On Dubai's Jaddaf Waterfront, meanwhile, the Jameel Arts Centre is an independent art institution and Sculpture

Park and 200-seat amphitheatre that functions as an artistic community, with artwork regularly on display, guest lectures and talks, and workshops. One of the newest neighbourhoods is the purpose-built Dubai Design District, or d3, which brings together industry big-wigs, start-ups and entrepreneurs. This is where the city's flagship design events take place, as well as Dubai Design Week, which celebrates everything from street fashion and music to art and sport through exhibitions, commissions, installations and more.

GASTRONOMIC TOUCH

Home to more than 200 different nationalities, Dubai is a true melting pot in all senses – especially when it comes to cuisine. The emirate has emerged as one of the world's most diverse gastronomic hubs, with 13,000 different cafes and restaurants, ranging from neighbourhood cafes to Michelin-starred eateries. It's even ranked higher than cities like New York, Bangkok, Singapore and Barcelona as world's fourth-best destination for food lovers in the TripAdvisor 2022 Travellers' Choice Awards.

Dubai is now considered the food and drink capital of the Middle East and North Africa (it's home to 80 per cent of the 340 fine dining restaurants operating in the UAE's largest cities), claiming six places in the inaugural edition of the Middle East & North Africa's 50 Best Restaurant Awards. In 2022, Gault&Millau, the fine dining food critique brand that originally launched in Paris, came to the UAE, and Dubai became the first city in the region to feature its own Michelin Guide (nine restaurants earned a star, and two received two Michelin stars).

The awards are not only an indicator of the growing culinary sector, they're also a showcase of the impact the city's cultural offerings have on visitors and locals alike. As tourism continues booming – the first nine months of 2022 saw Dubai welcome more than 10 million international visitors – it's helping shape the gastronomic scene. And the city's restaurants are "designed by the world, for the world."

Take Downtown Dubai and restaurants like At.mosphere, the world's highest



restaurant, which is located on the 122nd floor of the Burj Khalifa. The neighbourhood is also home to Time Out Market Dubai, which features 17 global food concepts created by some of the city's top eateries and chefs. Karama, meanwhile, is a blend of old and new Dubai with street food-style fare, as well as Daniel Boulud's fine dining Brasserie Boulud.

No trip to Dubai is complete without venturing away from the heart of the city – to the desert, with its dunes. Take a morning safari camel riding across the desert in the same way people have here for centuries. Following the sunset, they will be treated to the ultimate Arabian feast with entertainment at a desert camp. Planners can even arrange for an overnight stay under the stars complete with dancers, music and traditional clothing visitors can try on to have the full cultural experience.

PRESERVING HERITAGE

One of Dubai's newest cultural offerings for associations visiting the emirate is the 25,000-sqm Etihad Museum, which showcases the contemporary history of the UAE. Housed in a new building in Jumeirah, the museum is composed of a series of interactive pavilions that takes visitors through the UAE's history and development – particularly between 1968 and 1974 – through photos and film, as well as a library and education centre. It's also located on the same site as the Union House, where the constitution was signed in 1971.

As the emirate continues growing, it's still maintaining a strong sense of past while developing the present. Delegates meeting in Dubai will have the chance to see history in the making with each new museum, art gallery and cultural space that adds to the dynamic foundation the city is built on.



WHAT IF THE WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY HAD A CAPITAL?

Wouldn't it be nice if a global business event didn't require a global commute? With over 4 billion people less than 8 hours away and access to some of the world's greatest minds and wonders, why not let the global leader in hospitality host your next event?

Discover all that's possible in Dubai at dubaibusinessesevents.com