

# Splashing out

Dubai is a cool choice for summer, finds Kerry Webb

**G**uaranteed sunshine is usually right at the top of the 'must-have' list when choosing where to go for summer, but pick somewhere too balmy and Brits can start sounding a bit like Goldilocks – we like it hot, but not too hot.

So the idea of heading to Dubai, where the mercury easily rises to the 40s in summer, can seem like a step too far. Yet with the rollout of its international campaign, Dubai Tourism has been trying to turn those negative perceptions around.

A series of digital and radio campaigns and collaboration with a number of UK trade partners to offer attractive deals and packages are expected to see

Dubai become a popular summer choice once again, especially among families.

"We have been incredibly successful in positioning Dubai over the past two years as a very viable summer destination among British holidaymakers," says Marc Bennett, senior vice-president international at Dubai Tourism. "And we are delighted with the support and enthusiasm from the trade. It's worth noting that the second-largest visitation month of 2015 for UK visitors to Dubai was August, with nearly 100,000 Brits staying in Dubai hotels.

"The reality is that temperatures are on a par with those in previously popular north

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**In summer, we add lots of extras such as complimentary upgrades to half board and 50% off**

African destinations and are also close to those enjoyed in southern Spain and Turkey at this time of year."

So while the heat may still seem like a drawback, there are plenty of positives that might be enough to convince clients to give Dubai a try this summer.

## ► VALUE FOR MONEY

This is the season when Dubai suddenly becomes affordable for those people who find it a touch too pricey the rest of the year. Alternatively, some will find themselves able to upgrade to a hotel that might otherwise have been outside their price range.

"Dubai is extremely good value at this time of year," says Caribtours product executive Natalie Pisova. "We add lots of extras on to the trip such as complimentary upgrades to half-board and 50% off accommodation. Offers like this make it a feasible option for those for whom it might not be possible for otherwise."

Guests checking into

**RIGHT:**  
Dubai  
Aquarium

**FAR RIGHT:**  
Iridium Spa,  
St Regis Dubai

**BELOW:**  
KidZania



## SAMPLE PRODUCT

**Travel 2** offers three nights in a Luxury Palm View room in Sofitel The Palm Dubai from £699 half-board, including flights from London and transfers, between August 11 and September 9. The price includes a free room upgrade and free half-board. [travel2.com](http://travel2.com)

**If Only** offers a five-night stay at Movenpick Ibn Battuta Gate Hotel from £699, including Emirates flights from Heathrow, breakfast, a Superior room, private transfers, valid until July 9 or from August 11 to September 15, for bookings made by June 9. [ifonly.net](http://ifonly.net)

→ Dubai's JA Palm Tree Court this summer with Caribtours will pay just £1,159 for a five-night all-inclusive break, based on two adults sharing a Garden View Junior Suite, with two children staying for free, including flights. By comparison, the price tag in winter rises to £1,495, plus £409 per child, for bed and breakfast and flights.

Savings are also up for grabs by making use of the added-value deals that many hotels offer over the summer. For example, two tickets to the Dubai Aquarium and Underwater Zoo, a complimentary upgrade and credit to use the hotel spa are all thrown in when guests book two nights at Armani Hotel Dubai, for stays from June 9 to August 31.

Similarly, a 30-minute complimentary massage in the Iridium Spa per stay, alongside nearly £30 credit towards food and drink, is up for grabs for guests staying at the St Regis Dubai until September 15.

## ► SURPRISE, SURPRISE

The value-added bonuses extend way beyond the hotels across the rest of the city in the form of the annual Dubai Summer Surprises. This official citywide festival, running from July 9 to August 20, sees prices slashed across many of the city's almost 100 shopping malls.

Considering Dubai ranks as the world's second city for the sheer number of retail brands available, shopaholics can enjoy some serious

savings. Meanwhile, the malls become veritable theatres, laying on stage shows, concerts and nightly fireworks.

This summer schedule is yet another reason to head to the air-conditioned malls – a welcome escape if heat is an issue – which already offer a host of entertainment options.

## ► NON-STOP FUN

In the world's biggest shopping centre, The Dubai Mall, guests can dive with sharks in the Dubai Aquarium, visit indoor theme parks Sega Republic and KidZania, glide across the ice on the Olympic-sized ice rink and watch the daily free shows of dancing water as The Dubai Fountain springs to life.

Meanwhile, over at Mall of the Emirates, a snowy mountain awaits at Ski Dubai where guests can whizz down five ski runs, fly through the air on the Snow Bullet and waddle with a parade of snow penguins.

Dubai's famous waterparks



## FAST FACT

Ramadan is from June 6 to July 6, meaning some food and drink outlets are closed during daylight hours



**RIGHT:**  
Ski Dubai



Dubai Parks and Resorts, this summer sees the doors open to the world's biggest indoor theme park, IMG Worlds of Adventure, on August 15.

"Operating in a temperature-controlled environment allows us to mitigate seasonality, and welcome guests 365 days a year," says Ameer Husain, IMG Worlds of Adventure's sales director. "British vacationers are a big focus for us as the UK is one of the top-five source markets to Dubai."

Gold Medal is among the operators that will be able to package up tickets for the new parks alongside its flights and accommodation. Joanne Lowery, product manager for the Middle East, says: "Gold Medal will be selling tickets to IMG once it opens, along with Dubai Parks & Resorts. It will be a great option for families as it's all under one roof, meaning it's air-conditioned and perfect for the hot summer months."

In the meantime, the opening of Dubai Opera at the end of August adds yet another slant on Dubai's entertainment options, according to John Mullen, product manager at luxury operator Carrier.

He says: "Just when you think the destination can't possibly offer any more, it unveils the likes of Dubai Opera, which is sure to be another fantastic offering and add a new dimension to the entertainment experience in the emirate." **TW**



## ASK THE EXPERT



**Sheryl Drane,**  
destination  
manager,  
**Hayes & Jarvis**  
"Dubai is really accessible from the UK and in the summer the price point is attractive, often better value than a European holiday. It's also a great time to get some exceptional value-added extras, with most hotels offering complimentary half-board throughout the summer months. During Ramadan, the hotels will also offer elaborately decorated iftar tents. It's a great time to really experience the Arabic culture and an iftar buffet, so it's something we recommend guests try."

→ also allow families to make a splash, with residents of Atlantis The Palm qualifying for free access to Aquaventure and all Jumeirah guests enjoying free entry to Wild Wadi.

"Waterparks are always great for the whole family and the queues are likely to be smaller in the summer," says Hayes & Jarvis destination manager Sheryl Drane, referring to the fact that the majority of the city's largely expat population chooses this time to travel themselves.

The desert also awaits, with evening safaris taking place once the temperatures have dropped at the end of each day. And of course, as would be expected from one of the



## IMG Worlds of Adventure will be great for families as it's air-conditioned and perfect in the hot summer

fastest-growing cities in the world, there are always new attractions opening to entice repeat visitors.

### NEW FOR SUMMER

Just before the scheduled opening in October of three major theme parks by



**LEFT:** Wild Wadi Waterpark

**BELOW:** Artist's impression of Dubai Opera

