



A view at the Dubai Safari park. (Dubai Municipality)

Dubai Safari: an immersive wildlife experience for all ages

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Dubai

Dubai Safari is the latest, crowd-gathering attraction in the emirate.

A staff of 260 caters to the daily flow of 10,000 visitors to the 119-hectare site, which opened in December. Safari-goers have been spending 3-4 hours on average exploring the park and enjoying the immersive experiences and interactive activities.

“Dubai Municipality expects to welcome 3 million to 5 million visitors at Dubai Safari by the end of 2018,” said Hussain Nasser Lootah, director-general of Dubai Municipality.

“It is a world-class wildlife park that is home to the most diverse array of animals in the UAE with more than 2,500 animals representing more than 250 species from around the world. The park offers a range of wildlife experiences and edutainment activities tailored for visitors of all ages.”

Featured are a wide range of exhibits across Arabian, African, Asian and Safari villages, where visitors come face to face with ungulates, carnivores, birds, reptiles, primates and small mammals.

Dubai Safari is home to the United Arab Emirates’ largest group of baboons, the largest drive-through lion exhibit, the country’s only drive-through hippo and tiger exhibits and the world’s first drive-through



A herd of zebras graze at the African Village of the Dubai Safari park. (Dubai Municipality)



A lion is seen at the Dubai Safari park. (Dubai Municipality)

crocodile exhibit. The park’s walk-through aviary has birds from all around the world.

Visitors can view and learn about a wide variety of poisonous, non-poisonous and endangered snakes, lizards, vipers and pythons.

Dubai Safari’s key attraction is the Safari Village drive-through that takes visitors on a bus ride of up to 2 hours to explore the diverse wildlife of Africa and Asia.

The trip allows visitors to enjoy close glimpses at “rhinoceros, springboks, cape buffalos, giraffes, zebras, crocodiles, impalas, striped hyenas and more,” Lootah said.

For most visitors, the Dubai Safari experience starts at the Arabian Village with a 20-minute guided tour through the Arabian desert, encountering animals native to the Middle

East such as oryx, gazelles, ibex, Arabian wolves, ostriches, saiga antelopes and mouflons.

The African Village enables visitors to spot carnivores, including cape hunting dogs, spotted hyenas, cheetahs and meerkats, primates such as lemurs, monkeys, chacma baboons, chimpanzees and gorillas and ungulates such as the pygmy hippo, the bongo and antelopes. The African Village is also home to the park’s Reptile House and the aviary.

“Another highlight of the park is the Asian Village featuring a diverse group of animals native to the continent, including the orangutan, silver and siamang gibbons, crocodiles, snapping turtle, alligator, moon

bears and more,” Lootah said.

Dubai Safari has incorporated many environmentally friendly features that allow it to operate using minimum resources and leverages renewable energy.

“First, it is built on a former construction waste landfill, which was levelled and reclaimed to provide a suitable site for wildlife,” Lootah said. “Inside the park premises, electric trams, cable cars, bicycles and e-vehicles offer eco-friendly means of transport and all of the park’s parking lots and the internal lighting are solar-powered.”

Dubai Safari offers interactive programmes to learn more about animal behaviour and physiology. “A range of interactive displays allow children to listen to various speeds of animal heartbeats and animal sounds through pushing buttons on interactive exhibits or actively milk a cow or a goat,” said Lootah.

“The twice-daily bird show at the Small Theatre in the African Village presents an excellent opportunity to introduce kids to the lively world of flight.”

Visitors encounter and learn about a variety of birds including the predatory red-legged seriema, the colourful blue-and-gold macaw, crows, owls, the world’s tallest flying bird – the sarus crane, the rare hornbills, Moluccan cockatoos, which are native to Indonesia, and toucans, which are among the most popular birds in the world.

Entry at Dubai Safari is affordable. An all-access package costs 30 dirhams (\$8.16) for children and 85 dirhams (\$23.14) for adults while entry to the three villages, excluding Safari Village, is priced at 20 dirhams (\$5.44) for children and 50 dirhams (\$13.61) for adults. Children under 3, those older than 60 and people of determination (the disabled) enjoy free access to the park.

Tickets can be purchased at the main entrance, online at www.dubaisafari.ae or through the Dubai Safari mobile application.



The main entrance of the Dubai Safari park. (Dubai Municipality)

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Agenda

Beirut:
Through March 21

Al Bustan International Festival of Music and the Performing Arts is a musical celebration in Beirut. With an emphasis on chamber music, the festival promotes music from all over the world and includes orchestral concerts, choral music, puppets, opera and dance.

Amman:
Through May

As part of Friends of Jordan Festivals, Al Hussein Cultural Centre will host a Classical Concerts Cycle with acts from Japan, France, the Czech Republic and other countries.

Doha:
March 6-9

The second International Kite Festival will take place in Aspire Park in Doha. Professional kite flyers gather to compete in individual and team events, including synchronised kite performances and kite flying art displays. The festival offers a wide variety of activities, including kiting workshops.

Tafraoute:
March 15-18

The Almond Blossom Festival, celebrated every year in Morocco, sees villagers mark the almond harvest with Berber dancing, singing and almond tastings. International musicians and actors mingle with local performers for live events based on Moroccan folklore.

Luxor:
March 16-22

The Luxor African Film Festival is an annual event in Egypt. In its seventh year, the festival will screen films produced in African countries in Long Narratives, Long Documentaries and Short Films categories.

Zammour, Tunisia:
March 17-20

The second Zammour Fest takes place in a Berber village in the Tunisian Sahara. Over four days and three nights, visitors camp in Bedouin tents, trek or bike in the village, visit mountains, attend folklore parties and enjoy traditional food.

Marrakech:
March 18-24

The 13th International Contemporary Dance Festival “On Marche” will include participants from around the world taking part in workshops, classes and conferences. Dance performances will be staged in the streets of Marrakech during the festival.

Haifa:
March 22-27

The third Haifa Independent Film Festival will take place in Palestinian venues, including Al Midan Theatre, Khashabi Theatre and Kabareet alternative pub. The festival, which focuses on local cinema, will screen newly released movies in addition to older films.

We welcome submissions of calendar items related to cultural events of interest to travellers in the Middle East and North Africa.

Please send tips to:
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