



10 shopping and leisure destinations in Dubai for business-minded travellers

Introduction

The world's leading shopping and exhibition destination, Dubai, has welcomed more than [18 million tourists](#) in 2024. The [city's shopping hubs](#) are not only popular with tourists but also create valuable opportunities for brands and entrepreneurs looking to reach a wider audience.

This feature looks at Dubai's [growing tourism industry](#). This edition explores ten shopping and leisure destinations that attract visitors from all over the world and offer clear potential for businesses in retail, hospitality, and related sectors.



1

Dubai Mall

As the most-visited destination on Earth, Dubai Mall records more than [100 million visitors](#) every year. Beyond its flagship luxury boutiques and experiential retail, it's home to entertainment zones like the Dubai Aquarium and VR Park. Entrepreneurs exploring how to start a business in Dubai will find the mall's consistent footfall an unmatched advantage. From short-term pop-up stores to long-term brand collaborations, this location provides reliable exposure to a diverse and high-spending customer base.





2

Mall of the Emirates

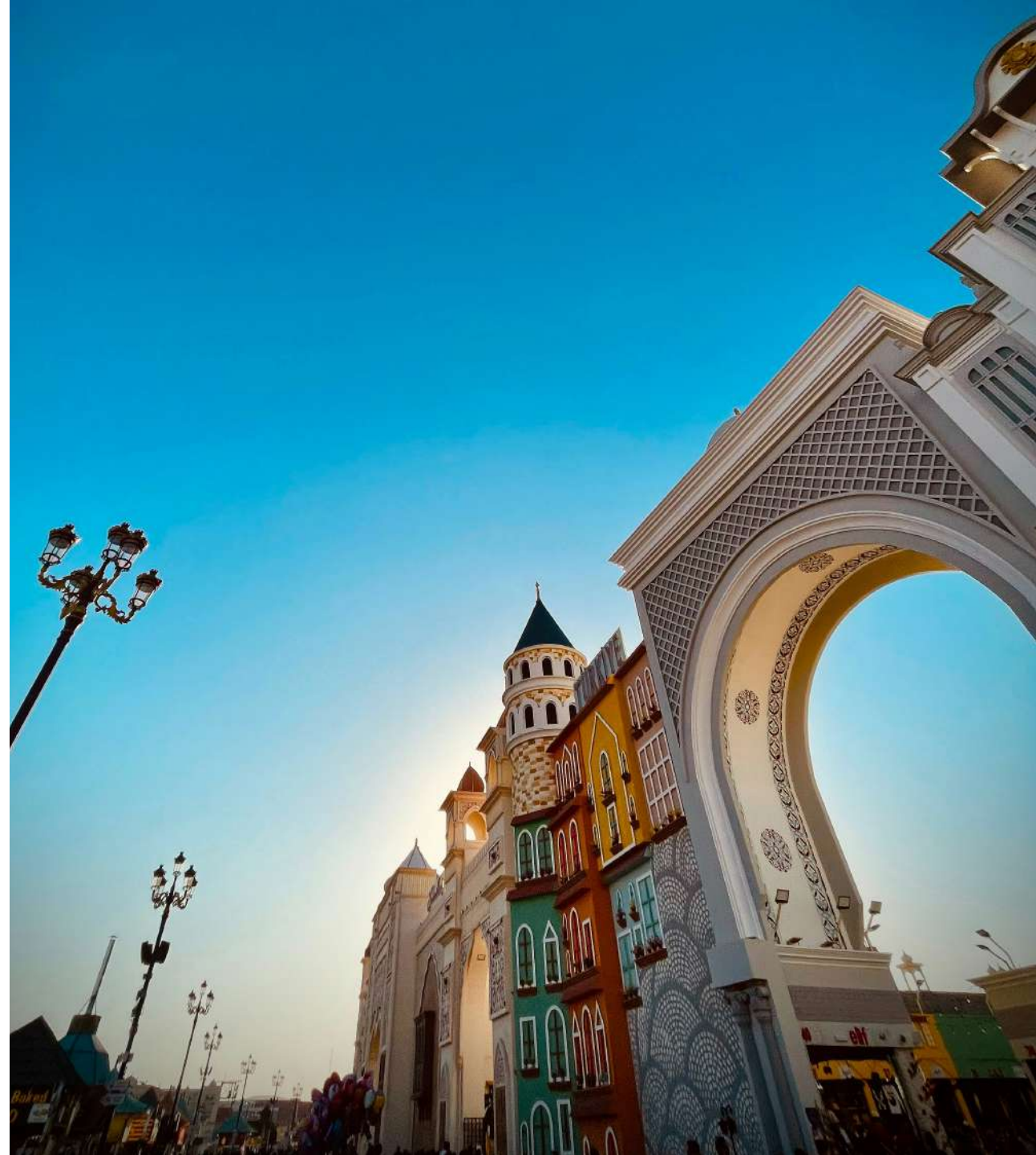
Known for Ski Dubai, a unique indoor ski resort, and its wide range of fashion labels, Mall of the Emirates is a leading shopping spot for locals and residents seeking premium experiences. SMBs planning to set up their businesses in Dubai could find that this mall provides reliable access to customers with strong purchasing power. The combination of leisure attractions and luxury retail makes it an effective platform for establishing a strong market presence.

3

Global Village

Global Village operates seasonally and combines shopping experiences with cultural shows and cuisine from over 90 countries across 30 pavilions. Ranked amongst the top [10% of tourist attractions](#) worldwide, the theme park attracts large crowds during its annual run. In fact, it has recorded 10.5 million visitors in its fairly recently concluded [Season 29](#).

With pop-up retail and multicultural trade, this place is ideal for SMEs interested in testing new products, building brand awareness, and accessing business incentives designed to support ventures linked to [Dubai's tourism sector](#).





4

DIFC and City Walk

DIFC and City Walk attract professionals, families and tourists interested in art galleries, fine dining and luxury shopping experiences. Company owners looking to start a business in Dubai find these areas appealing for their premium positioning, steady corporate foot traffic, and access to affluent residents. The combination of modern retail and vibrant public spaces also helps brands stand out in a competitive.

5

Expo City Dubai

Formerly Expo 2020, Expo City has been redeveloped into an event and business district with seasonal events, family activities, and global exhibitions. The area is increasingly being seen as a platform for innovation and trade. Hence, it is perfect for companies setting up a business in Dubai in event management, food services and experiential retail.





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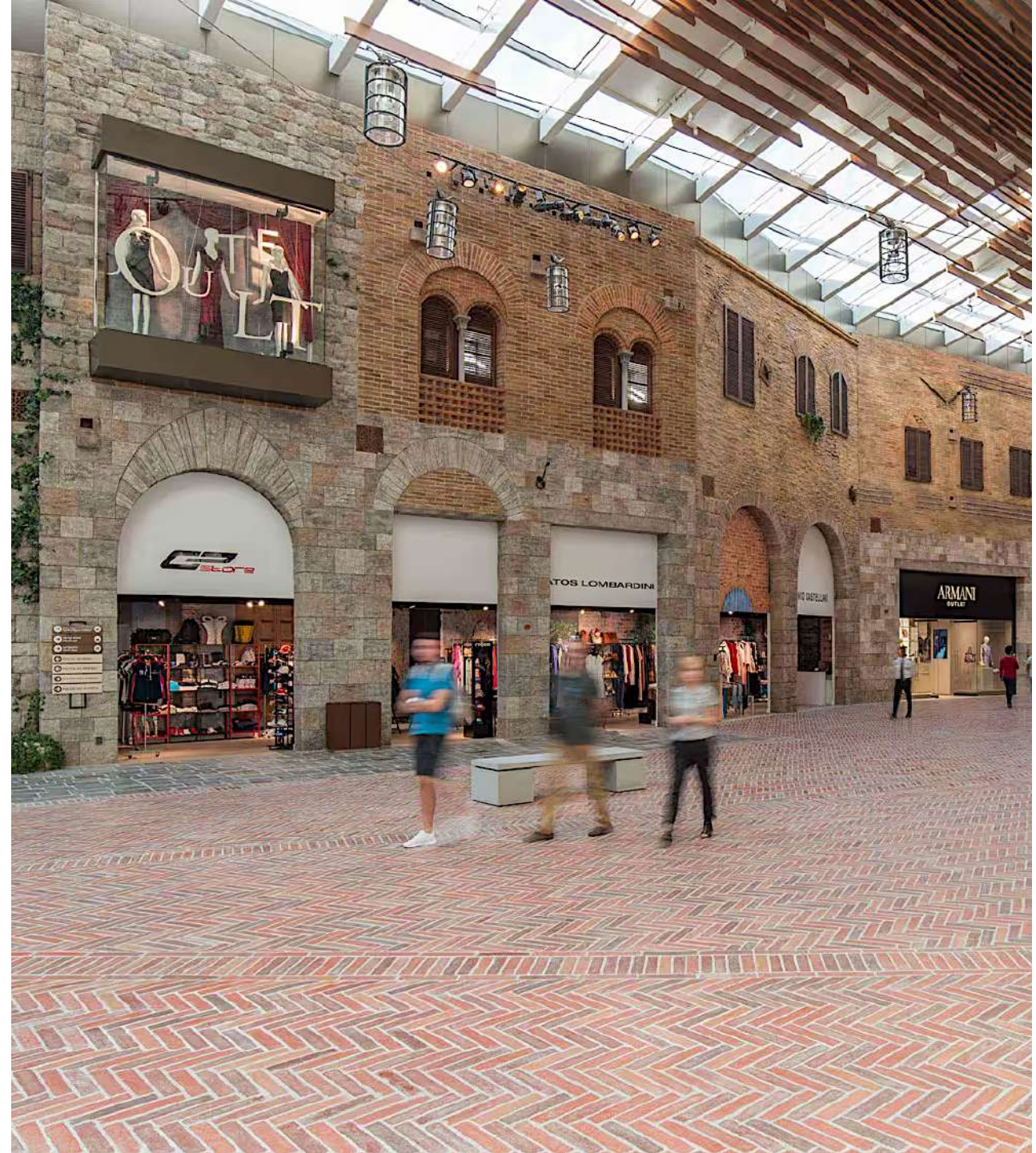
Dubai Marina

With its glittering skyline reflected in calm waters, Dubai Marina offers a blend of upscale shopping, waterfront dining, and leisure activities such as yacht tours and beachside promenades. The district's mix of residential and tourist crowds creates a steady flow of potential customers, making it ideal for restaurateurs and retailers to trial experiential concepts. For entrepreneurs, the business environment encourages creative retail formats and lifestyle-focused services that align with its cosmopolitan vibe.

7

The Outlet Village

Offering seasonal discounts on luxury brands, The Outlet Village draws both budget-conscious tourists and residents. For retail brands, the mall supports high-volume sales strategies and short-term activations. This is ideal for SMEs entering the UAE through Dubai business incentives and temporary licenses.





8

Bluwaters Island

This seaside destination blends leisure, iconic attractions like Ain Dubai, and premium brand retail. Its growing popularity makes it attractive for [Dubai SMEs](#) in hospitality and retail looking to cater to high-tourist demand with mid- to high-end offerings.

9

Jumeirah and Atlantis

These retail spaces cater to high-net-worth individuals seeking convenience and exclusive products. As a result, they are well-suited to niche brands, specialty retailers, and service providers interested in doing business in Dubai within the hospitality-related retail segment. This environment allows entities to engage directly with a premium clientele and build strong brand recognition among international guests.





10

Gold Souk

Dubai's Gold Souk in Deira is one of the world's largest and most established gold markets. The area draws both tourists and professional buyers looking for jewellery, bullion, and precious stones. Retailers and traders doing business in Dubai often choose the Gold Souk for its strong reputation, transparent pricing and steady customer demand. Entrepreneurs exploring precious metals or luxury retail can take advantage of tax benefits and import efficiencies to serve both tourists and residents.

Why businesses should pay attention

Dubai's retail-tourism sector is one of the [most business-friendly](#) in the region. Its appeal is reinforced by major infrastructure investments, including the AED128 billion expansion of Al Maktoum International Airport, and strong global partnerships with brands such as Emirates, Hilton, and Emaar. The city's high rankings in safety (5th globally, Numbeo 2024) and cleanliness (1st globally for the fifth consecutive year, GPCI – Mori Memorial Foundation) further enhance its attractiveness.

Undeniably, entrepreneurs and global brands looking into doing business in Dubai will find infrastructure, incentives, and consumer demand aligned to long-term success.

More information and resources



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