

# WHERE TO STAY

DUBAI | QATAR | CÔTE D'AZUR



## New Kid on the Block

A first of its kind outside of Europe, Dubai's 25hours Hotel One Central is a playful foil to the city's ultra-shiny hotels

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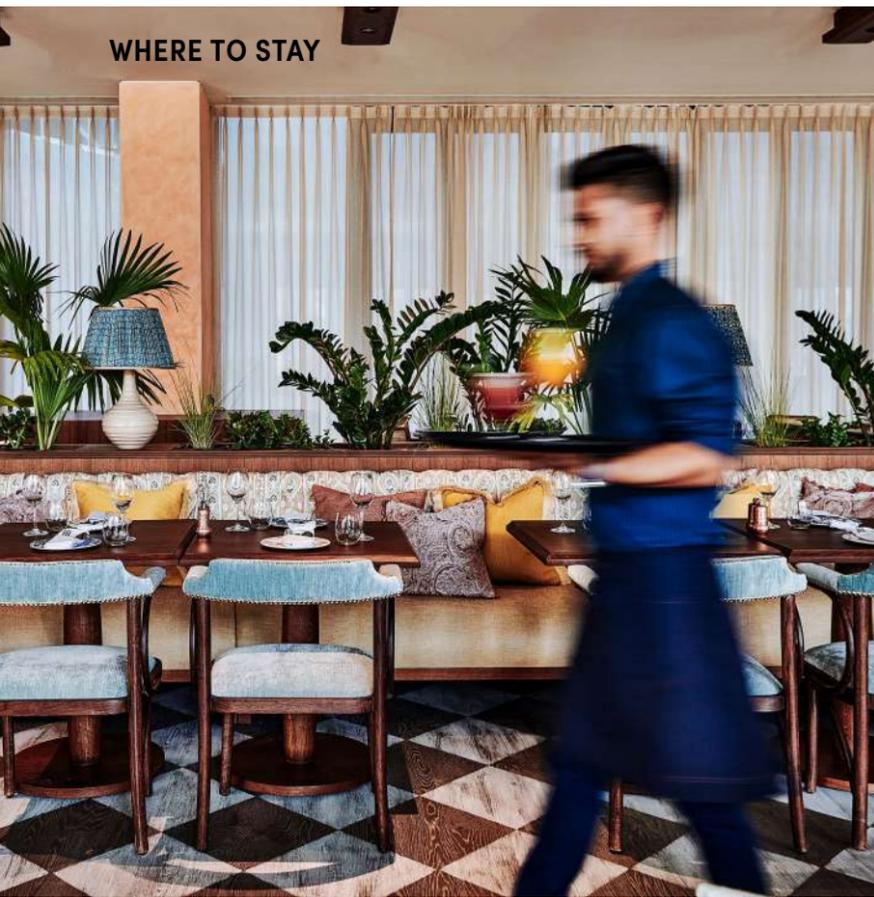
Every so often a hotel comes along and almost changes the DNA of a city, redefining and reinventing its hospitality scene. This appears to be the mission of 25hours Hotel Dubai One Central, one of the city's most unique, and arguably most exciting, new hotels. In its guise in trendy European cities like Rome, Paris, Florence and Berlin, 25hours is synonymous with hedonism and playfulness – because, as the name suggests, there aren't enough hours in the day.

That same Euro-cool energy and carefree spirit arrives in Dubai's One Central with the brand's first outpost not only in the Middle East, but outside of Europe. In some ways, it's the embodiment of a new Dubai: stylish and luxurious, of course, but free-spirited, fast-paced, all-inclusive, open to change and full of surprises. Cheeky slogans like "let's spend the night together" (branded on pillows), "caution, hot and wet inside" (on coffee cups) and "don't you dare" (on sleeping masks) push the boundaries – but nothing more than the first mixed-gender sauna in the Middle East, a nod to the brand's German roots.

The story begins in the lobby, where guests enter a soaring atrium centred around a "fountain of tales" with 5,000 books. The hotel's theme is inspired by the Arabic art of *hakawati* – storytelling – and the evolution from Bedouins to Arabs on Mars. Each floor takes guests on a journey through changing décor, artwork and typography. Gramophones, quirky artwork, cassette players and record-covered walls all feature, but with elegant furnishings and industrial-chic pieces in equal measure.

25hours lays claim to what might be the most design-led and unique hotel rooms in the city. The industrial-chic Bedouin is reminiscent of a traditional *majlis* with warm hues, alongside nods to its European sister properties in the →

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form of glass open showers. Artist Village suites have dual showers, in-room bicycles and plenty of living space; Farmstays feature colourful living areas and vivid tiles.

But the most impressive is the Hakawati Suite, set to rival most top-tier hotel suites in Dubai. Walls are a warm shade of mandarin and mosaic tiles add brilliant pops of colour; the space is perfect for parties, with a terrace, private bar area and even space for a DJ. When the night ends, guests can tumble into the “sheikh-sized” bed – three king-sized beds knocked together. In another playful 25hours move, a secret staircase links to two extra rooms – which can be booked to create one enormous super suite.

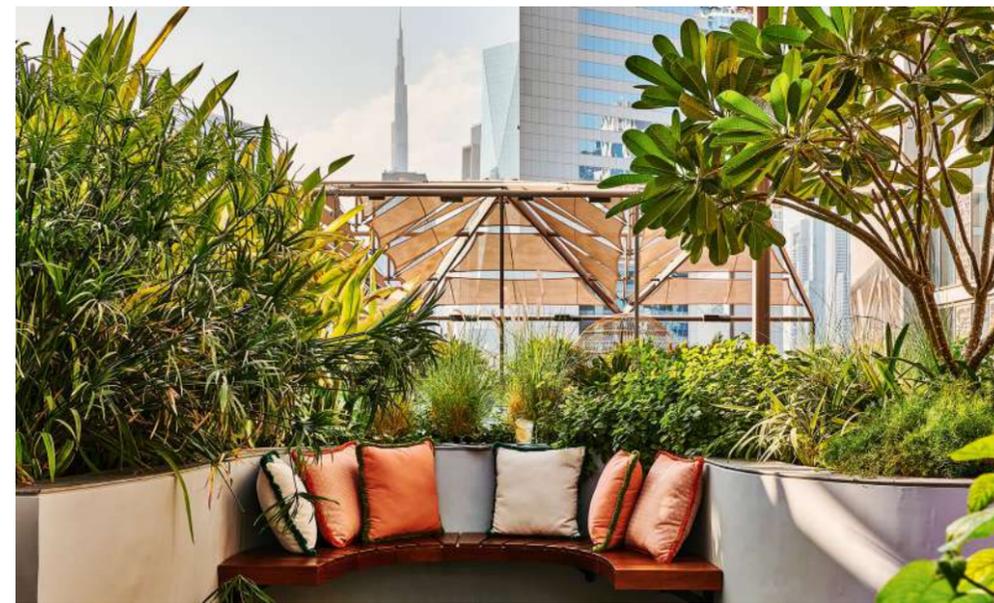
Frolicking around the zany floors of 25hours is hungry work, and the hotel’s restaurants and bars are bursting with creativity and culinary flair. Monkey Bar arrives by way of Berlin and Cologne; in the German capital, it’s regarded as one of the hottest spots in the city. Here it gets a glossy Dubai makeover; there’s a jungle-covered rooftop terrace with killer views of the Museum of the Future.

Downstairs is Tandoor Tina, the fun and frivolous little sister of London’s Tandoor Chophouse, serving British Indian cuisine. Ceramics in dusty Rajasthan pink and jewel tones, towering potted plants and quirky artworks make it a visual pleasure, and the menu entices with Indian Scotch eggs, onion bhaji rings and the signature “alright dahl.”

But what thrills Dubai’s caffeine-addicted crowd most is Nomad Day Bar, a partnership with the city’s beloved Nightjar Coffee Roasters. Coffee lovers no longer have to queue at Alserkal Avenue or Time Out Market for the famous brew, settling in instead at the lobby’s all-day outpost. Outside in the courtyard is seating for both Tandoor Tina and Nomad; in another nod to the brand’s German heritage, a hops garden Ernst is set to open in the near future, promising those same views of the Museum of the Future and Downtown Dubai.

The best views, however, are from the hotel’s canopied rooftop, where a swimming pool is fringed by plush pale grey loungers and an indoor-outdoor gym with Technogym equipment has space for visiting instructors to operate classes. Another nice vantage point is from the first 25hours spa in the world, whose terrace houses a verdant relaxation area with views of the city.

Also scattered throughout the hotel are a handful of warehouse-style conference rooms, a salon by celebrity hair stylist Wassim Steve, a rooftop herb garden, an art gallery-turned-exhibition space and



a showroom where luxury and trendy brands hold showcases. This is also a place where visitors and locals converge, thanks to a dedicated co-working space where creatives fire away at their laptops, fuelled by Nightjar coffee. There’s also an in-house podcast recording studio and pottery workshop, where ceramic masterpieces made on the hotel’s wheels are all fired for guests to take away. A relaxation and games room is also on hand exclusively for guests.

While the hotel captivates with its head-spinning interiors and offbeat amenities, exploring the city is encouraged. Guests can borrow Schindelhaur bicycles and e-bikes and can, for free, take one of the hotel’s fleet of Minis out for a spin once a week during their stay. The cogs are all in motion for 25hours Hotel One Central to inject a dose of European friskiness to cosmopolitan Dubai, and we’re excited for what’s to come. *Doubles from AED 700; 25hours-hotels.com* 

Clockwise from top left: Tandoor Tina; the rooftop garden; suites boast rooftop baths; a Farmstay suite; 25hours-branded Minis for guests to drive; views from the rooftop pool. Previous page: A Bedouin room