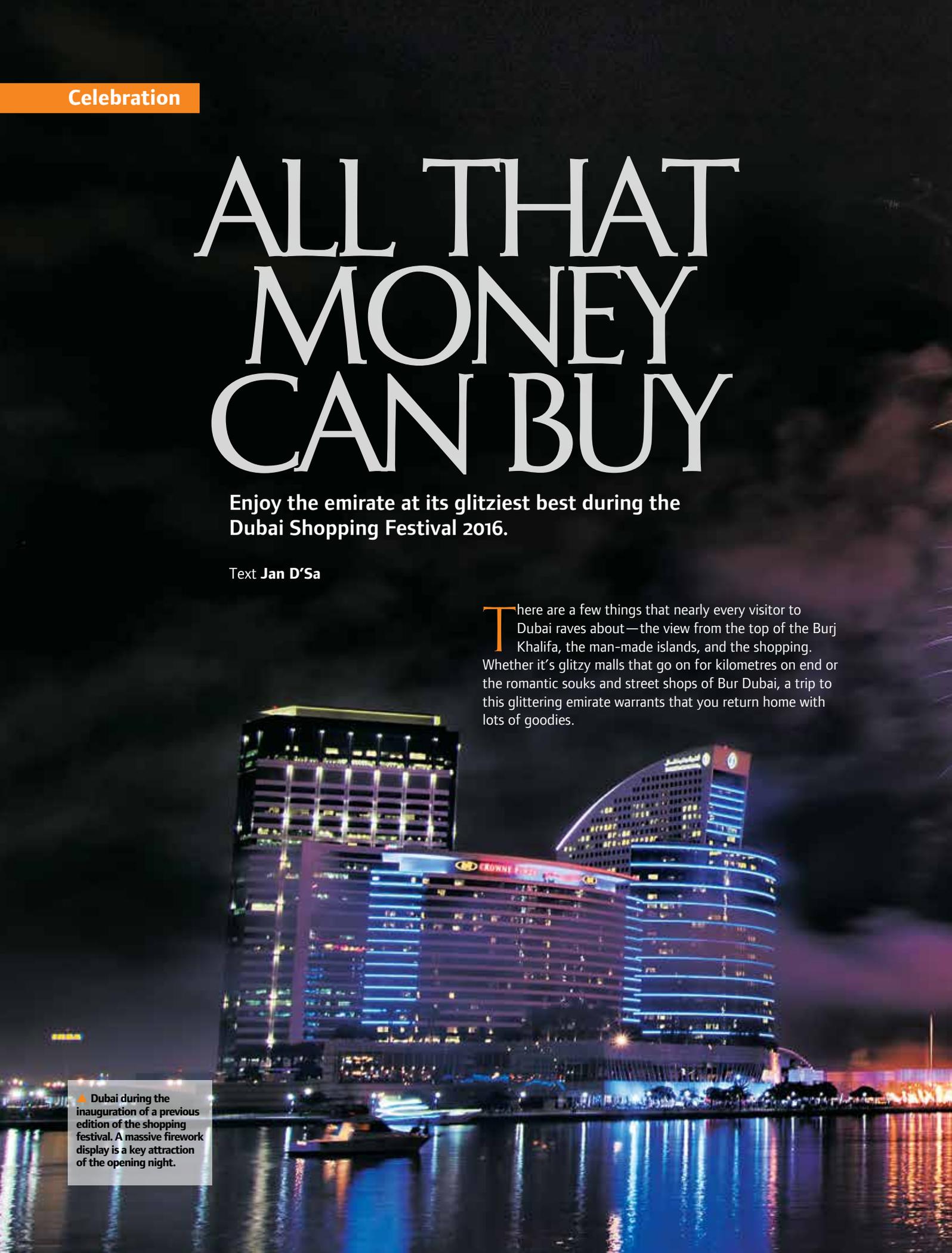


# ALL THAT MONEY CAN BUY

Enjoy the emirate at its glitziest best during the Dubai Shopping Festival 2016.

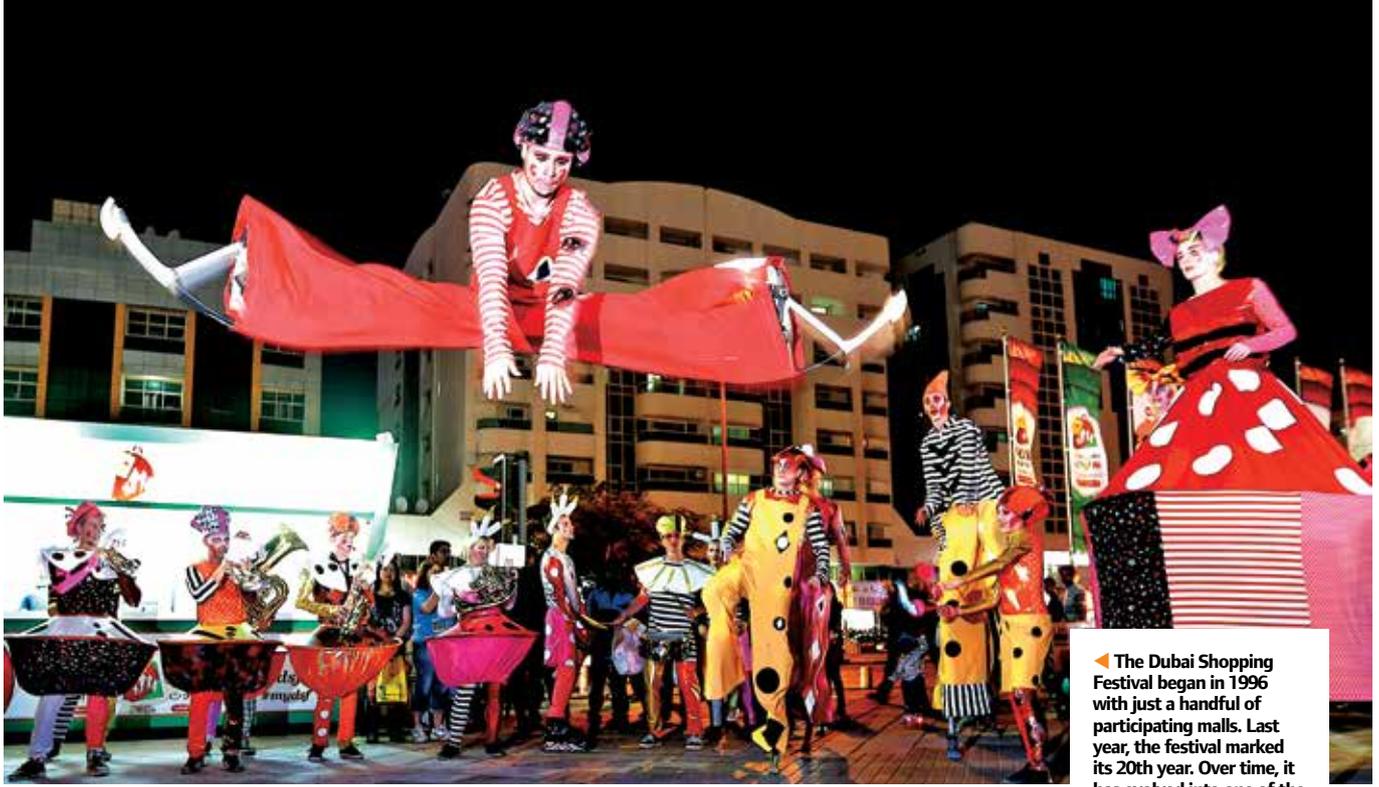
Text Jan D'Sa

There are a few things that nearly every visitor to Dubai raves about—the view from the top of the Burj Khalifa, the man-made islands, and the shopping. Whether it's glitzy malls that go on for kilometres on end or the romantic souks and street shops of Bur Dubai, a trip to this glittering emirate warrants that you return home with lots of goodies.



▲ Dubai during the inauguration of a previous edition of the shopping festival. A massive firework display is a key attraction of the opening night.





◀ The Dubai Shopping Festival began in 1996 with just a handful of participating malls. Last year, the festival marked its 20th year. Over time, it has evolved into one of the biggest events on Dubai's calendar.

Images courtesy DSF Media Library

So then what better time to partake in the best that Dubai has to offer than the Dubai Shopping Festival (DSF), a mega event that's dedicated to all the things that money can buy. Dubai has always stood by the adage that bigger is better and the emirate never ceases to amaze with its grandeur and the ambitious scale of everything it does. It comes as no surprise, then, that the 21st edition of the Dubai Shopping Festival (DSF)—which will bring in the New Year in Dubai—will be bigger and better than ever before.

### Something for everyone

The festival, on from January 1 to February 1, 2016, is a time when malls and stores across the city offer great discounts (for instance, retail outlets within all major malls will offer up to 90 per cent off on January 1 and 2)—but that's not all there is to it. This is also the time that Dubai is at its vibrant best, as DSF is as much about entertainment as it is about retail. So, you can expect plenty of exciting events—from fashion shows to musical performances and stand-up comedy—at multiple venues throughout the month. In all, close to 150 activities and events will be organised during the festival. While walking around Dubai's vast malls, expect to bump into clowns, magicians and other artistes who'll add some smiles to your shopping experience.

Other than this, there are, of course, daily mega giveaways for shoppers. Just shop till you drop, and who knows, you might just get to drive home a swanky new car or take away AED 200,000 in cash.



### Make the best of the fest

1. Hit shops at off-peak hours for stress-free shopping.
2. January is a great time to visit Dubai as it is a winter month. The days are warm and the nights are cool, so carry a light sweater or shawl, especially for open-air activities.
3. Research is key in ensuring you have the best DSF experience. You will be mobbed by discounts everywhere you look. Follow DSF across its active social media channels. Dubai has many popular bloggers writing about fashion, beauty, food, jewellery and technology. Follow their blogs to keep track of what to look out for.
4. Dubai has a reliable metro and tram system that connects to various major malls as well as Jumeirah Beach Residence (JBR) and Dubai Marina. You can use the abra (water taxis) and the buses. Check the Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) website for schedules and costs ([www.rta.ae](http://www.rta.ae)).



◀ From street performances and circus acts to cultural shows, musical events, comedy acts, theatre and car racing, there are tons of entertainment events running alongside the Dubai Shopping Festival.



Images courtesy DSF Media Library

### Other activities

January 6–9: Award-winning Broadway musical, Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, at Dubai World Trade Centre

January 7–8: Paris Opera Ballet Gala, Madinat Theatre, Jumeirah

January 14–16: Hankook 24H Dubai 2016, Dubai Autodrome, Motor City

January 21–23: The Affordable Home Show, Dubai Media City Amphitheatre

January 22–23: Quoz Arts Fest, Alserkal Avenue, Al Quoz

January 28–30: International Kite Fest, behind Sunset Mall

January 29–30: *Einstein*, starring Naseeruddin Shah, Dubai Community Theatre and Arts Centre, Mall of the Emirates

Another highlight of the 2016 edition of the festival is that the Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment (DFRE), which is under Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, has conceptualised one theme per week throughout the festival—Beauty Week, Gold and Jewellery Week, Apparel and Fashion Week, and Perfume Week—which means you can choose based on your interests.

### Why DSF?

Dubai's transformation from a small emirate into the Middle East's most-visited and glamorous destination has been remarkable. The emirate achieved this by investing in, promoting and modernising its tourism, hospitality and retail sectors, while preserving its traditional culture and heritage in old Dubai. As a result, it has developed into a strong business hub and financial centre with The Centre of Now—Downtown Dubai.

The Dubai Shopping Festival has played a big role in boosting trade and tourism in India, promoting it as a shopping haven as well as a family destination. Looking at the mega event that it is today, it's hard

to believe that in 1996, when the festival was launched, it had a miniscule budget; at the time, festival activities were restricted to Old Dubai districts and malls such as Al Ghurair Centre and Bur Juman Centre.

From then on, the festival has become a permanent fixture on the events scene of Dubai. Visitor numbers continued to increase: 2000 welcomed 2.55 million visitors and 2003 saw an influx of 2.92 million visitors. A leading global research firm YouGov, in a study commissioned by Dubai Events and Promotions Establishment (DEPE), stated that DSF boosted Dubai's economy by AED 15.1 billion in 2011 and the festival sees 4.5 million visitors, on average.

### What's in store

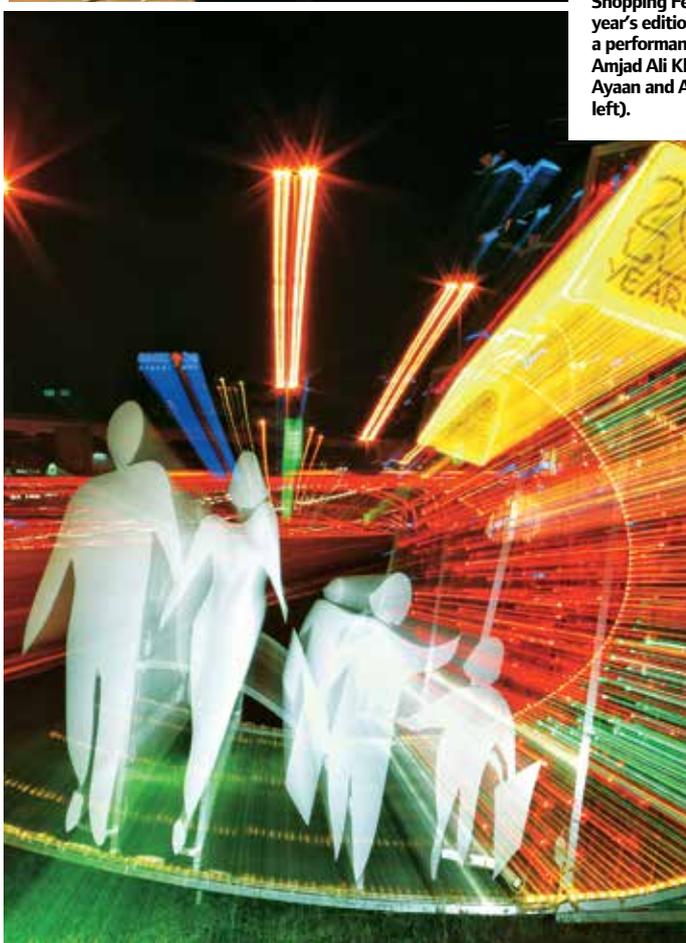
Pampering is the keyword for the first week of Dubai Shopping Festival 2016, Beauty Week. Women can enjoy a comfort-filled day in women-only salons and spas across Dubai and attend make-up and beauty tutorials in malls. NStyle in the Mall of the Emirates offers everything from massages to hair treatments and the works. You can also head to Paris Gallery

to get professional advice on skincare and how to use various beauty products. Those who swear by nail art can have their nails dotted with pop art at the Soh Art + Beauty salon in the Jumeirah. Men needn't feel left out either, for, At Marble Walk at Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), Hommage Atelier is a dedicated barbershop and a great grooming establishment for men. NStyle group, too, has launched a men's only salon called Urban Male Lounge at Mall of the Emirates.

The glittering second week of the festival has gold and jewellery as its theme. You can go old-school and shop at Dubai's Gold Souk



◀ Snapshots from the 2015 edition of the Dubai Shopping Festival. Last year's edition also saw a performance by Ustad Amjad Ali Khan and sons Ayaan and Amaan (top left).



in Deira, or head to the Gold and Diamond Park, accessible from the arterial Sheikh Zayed Road. You can even order custom-made jewellery here, as many of the retailers have their own workshops located in this area. For luxury brands such as Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels and Damas Jewellery, the malls are your best friend.

During the Apparel and Fashion Week, you can up your style quotient and stock up on enough clothes and handbags (at up to 50 per cent off) to see you through the year and can also pick up some timeless luxury pieces at prices that don't burn a hole in your pocket. This week should be dedicated to Dubai's 70-odd malls. If you want your own personal stylist, Dubai Mall offers a personalised luxury personal shopping experience that concludes with a private consultation at The Lounge, Fashion Avenue. Style Me Divine, the agency run by award-winning personal stylist Kelly Lundburg, assists both men and women for their personal shopping and styling needs.

Then, get your bartering hat on when you explore the Perfume Souk to get a heady whiff of traditional Emirati fragrance called *oud*, derived from agarwood, during Perfume Week. You can also buy *oud* fragrances from Swiss Arabia or the family-run Ajmal

Perfume House at various mall branches. If you prefer something more subtle, treat yourself to *bukhoor*—agarwood chips steeped in essential oils. These can be picked up at Deira's Spice Souk and make marvellous souvenirs.

### Off the beaten track

The DSF experience is enhanced by unique retail concepts such as the The Market Outside the Box, a fashion and lifestyle pop-up event where local as well as international retailers showcase their designs inside 'green' shipping containers. There are also movie screenings, cultural shows, workshops, talks and the like. Another familiar feature of DSF is Global Village. It is like a universe unto itself where several countries showcase their best products.

Expect bright colours, sounds and the blast of food aromas tantalising your senses as you pass by each pavilion. Global Village is open-air and a great place to spend the day at with family.

Carpet and Art Oasis at Dubai World Trade Centre showcases the world's finest hand-woven mats, harking back to the lives of the Emiratis of the past. This year, the world's leading carpet-producing countries such as India, Iran, Turkey, Pakistan and Afghanistan will be joined by retailers from Eastern Europe.

So, come experience Dubai at its festive best during the Dubai Shopping Festival, a feast for all senses.

## Fact file

### Getting there

Jet Airways operates daily flights to Dubai from Mumbai, Delhi, Kochi and Mangalore.

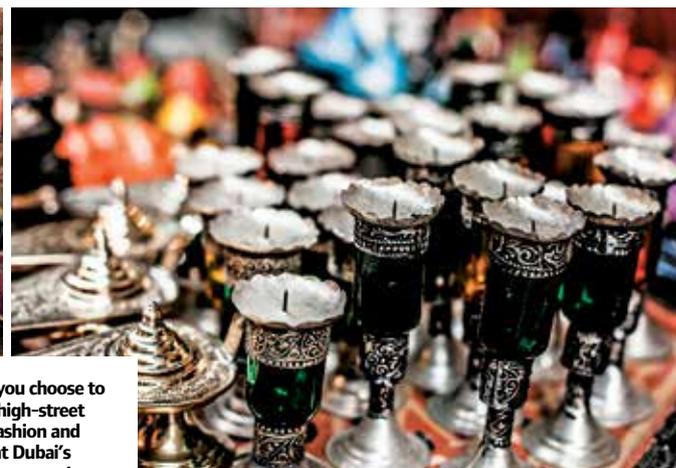
### Accommodation

From five-star hotels and luxury properties to budget hotels and hostels, you'll find accommodation to cater to every taste and budget.

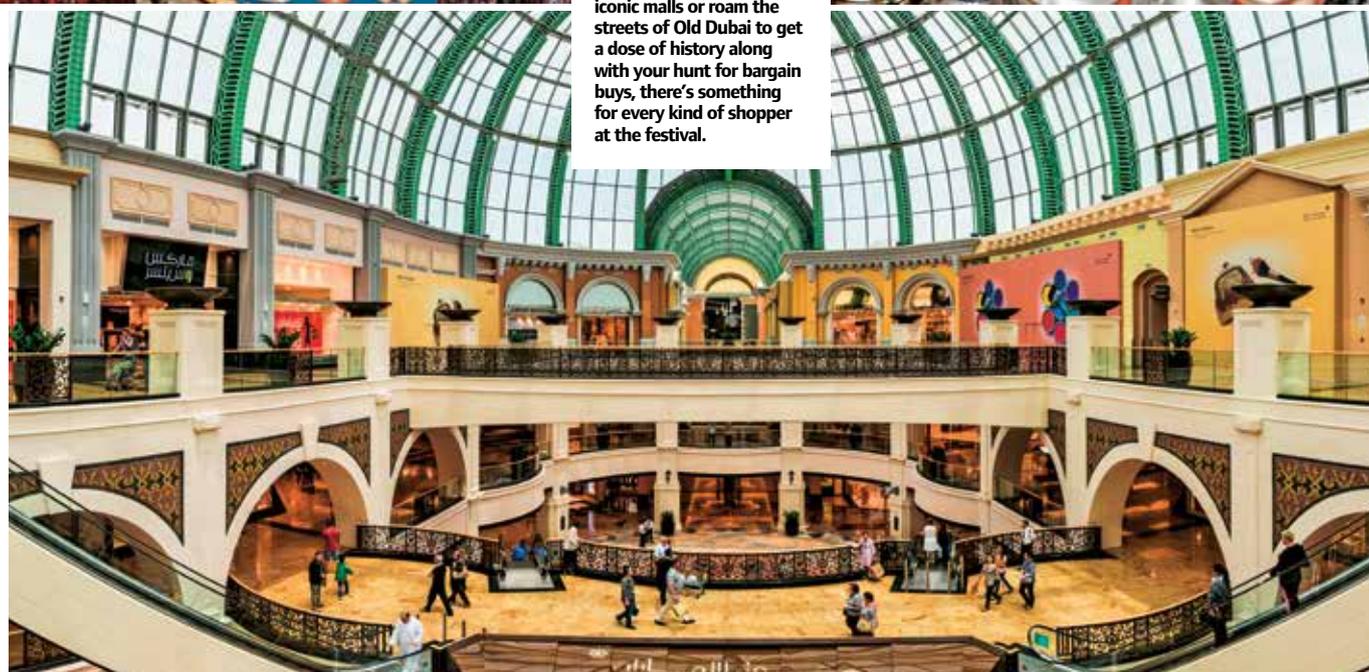
### For more information

Log on to log on to [www.visitdubai.com](http://www.visitdubai.com)

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◀ Whether you choose to stock up on high-street and luxury fashion and accessories at Dubai's iconic malls or roam the streets of Old Dubai to get a dose of history along with your hunt for bargain buys, there's something for every kind of shopper at the festival.



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