

# The Gateway to NEW DUBAI

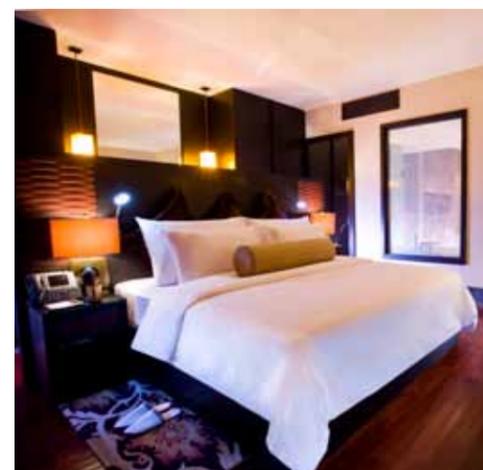
*Chelsey Baker* discovers the treasures hidden inside Ibn Battuta's chest



If you're searching for a journey of discovery that combines sheer luxury with ancient traditions, then look no further than 'New Dubai'. As the global hospitality industry continues to ponder the pace of business, Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts prepares for the opening of more than 1,200 rooms. In partnership with real estate developer, Seven Tides, four exclusive hotels will open this year with an enchanting historical theme, just waiting to be explored.

The first of the hotels to open is the five-star Ibn Battuta Gate Hotel, accessible through a 60-metre high Moroccan-style gate, the archway of which is larger than the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. The hotel is named after the great 14th century Arabian explorer, Ibn Battuta, known for his extensive account of his travels and excursions, which lasted nearly 30 years and covered almost the entirety of the known Islamic world and beyond, a distance which easily surpasses that of near-contemporary Marco Polo.

This striking addition to the Dubai skyline is the entrance to a unique combination of offices, 156 luxury residential apartments and a five-star hotel of iconic stature, both inside and out.



Located in 'New Dubai' as it's been dubbed, the complex is within 400 metres of a Metro station due to open this month, and also adjacent to the Ibn Battuta Mall with 300,000 square metres of retail space and entertainment attractions. Its close proximity to Jebel Ali and the new Al Maktoum International Airport aims to attract business travellers and inquisitive tourists from around the world.

The hotel features 396 guestrooms and 29 suites, all furnished in line with themes to reflect the somewhat glamorous travel log of Ibn Battuta. As you first enter the expansive lobby, designed to create an interactive ambiance with numerous seating areas, you can't help feeling a sense of grandeur while looking at the 88 giant Eastern-style lanterns hanging elegantly in the vast space that is best described as 'the hub of the house.' The Grand Hall is also the gateway to the hotel's eight restaurants and lounges.

The 14th century traveller's trail is reflected in every aspect of the eclectic architecture, interiors, and cuisine, offering a real design and taste journey. This embraces the jewelled plates and spices of India, the swags of the Ottoman Empire and the hieroglyphics of Ancient Egypt. The dining experience serves to tempt every taste with Sicilia offering rustic Italian, Chor Bazaar serving Indian cuisine and Shanghai Chic, elegant Chinese cuisine. Flavours and temptations from around the world complete the Arabian experience, with five more dining options available, including all-day dining at Mistral and freshly baked pastries at Pastane.

Next to open this month is the 216-room Mövenpick Hotel Deira, which has its sights set on welcoming business executives and curious shoppers. Located on the north side of the Creek, the hotel provides Deira's first new five-star accommodation. This heritage location is reflected in the hotel's architecture, giving travellers an immediate taste of Deira, the traditional home of Dubai's ruling family; it features spice and gold souks and carefully restored architecture of yesteryear, as well as hosting present-day merchants and many strategic commercial and government offices.

This year, the Asian-inspired Royal Amwaj Resort & Spa on Palm Jumeirah will also be ready to open. With some industry firsts, including an upscale all-inclusive package available through preferred travel partners, the 293-room retreat-like resort includes 18 villas perched on stilts a few metres above the sea, and beach-front locations framing the resort's 461-metre long beach. Guests can choose to be transferred to the resort by boat, from Dubai Creek, right to the mouth of a 2-kilometre private lagoon and a spa that respects its Balinese heritage. All of the rooms are free-standing and one suite has a glass-panelled floor that allows for 24/7 viewing of the sea bed for those who are truly captivated by underwater life.

2011 will also see the group completed with the opening of the contemporary Oceana Hotel & Spa. Seven Tides' second property located on Dubai's Palm Jumeirah will open 324 rooms set within the beach club grounds. The group's private beach residence, Oceana Beach Club, has already opened its freehold residences, beach club and a New York-influenced restaurant-bar venue, West 14th. The New York Bar and Grill delivers a waterfront location with excellent cuisine, including steaks cut by a master butcher.

Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts has clearly positioned itself in the upscale segment and, with everything running like clockwork, the Swiss group really has gone 'all out' to ensure it delivers uncompromising quality and service. ■

For more information visit [www.movenpick-hotels.com](http://www.movenpick-hotels.com)



Main image:  
Oceana Beach  
Resort & Spa  
Left to right:  
Royal Amwaj  
Resort & Spa  
Bedroom at Ibn  
Battuta Gate  
Ibn Battuta  
Gate Hotel