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JUMEIRAH BEACH HOTEL

Dubai

United Arab Emirates



THE EXPERIENCE

It doesn't take long to figure out that the Jumeirah Beach Hotel was constructed to look like a wave. That may seem a bit tacky now, but when it opened in 1997, this enormous

Jumeirah Beach Hotel

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VIEW WEBSITE

598 rooms, including 19 villas

all-glass structure was Dubai's most luxurious hotel. The luxury title has since passed on to the Burj Al Arab, but no one can argue that the hotel has some of the finest views in town; every room faces the crystal-clear waters of the Persian Gulf. However, visitors may find it hard to focus on those tranquil waves when the interior is just so busy. From the multicolored, corduroy-clad elevators to a massive 3-D fluorescent-lined mural of the Middle East, you may need a pair of shades to cut down on the larger-than-life hues. Still, this hotel is located on the best beach in the city; perhaps that's the benefit of setting a trend in Dubai opulence.

THE ROOMS

If sleek design is not high on your priority list, then there's simply nothing wrong with the rooms at Jumeirah Beach. Even the most basic standard room is a spacious 538 square feet, with a king-size bed and comfortable work area. But mismatched carpeting and comforter covers can create a dizzying effect; fortunately, you can relieve the eye strain with sweeping views out the floor-to-ceiling windows. Bathrooms are dated and uninspiring, yet still come with a walk-in shower and separate bath. An upgrade gets you the same type of room, so spring for it only if you're interested in the extras: club lounges and airport transfers.

THE SERVICE

Dubai is a city that aims to please. So it comes as no surprise that one of its first deluxe hotels does it efficiently and with a smile. Families will particularly enjoy the endless activities at the Sinbad's Kids Club. During the steamy summer months, golf carts help you get to any one of the hotel's five pools or the water park.

THE HIGHLIGHTS

With an airy, bilevel sports club, marina, seven tennis courts, a lap pool and a nine-hole putting green, you won't get bored here. That's also true of the food. The 23 restaurants and bars run from a traditional English pub to a red-brick German cellar, though most aren't worth the dirhams (two exceptions: the Argentinean steak house and the waterside seafood restaurant). For a romantic evening, head up to the 360° bar, where you can smoke shishas and sip on fruity cocktails while watching the sun set on the world's first seven-star hotel.

-- Marisa S. Katz

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