

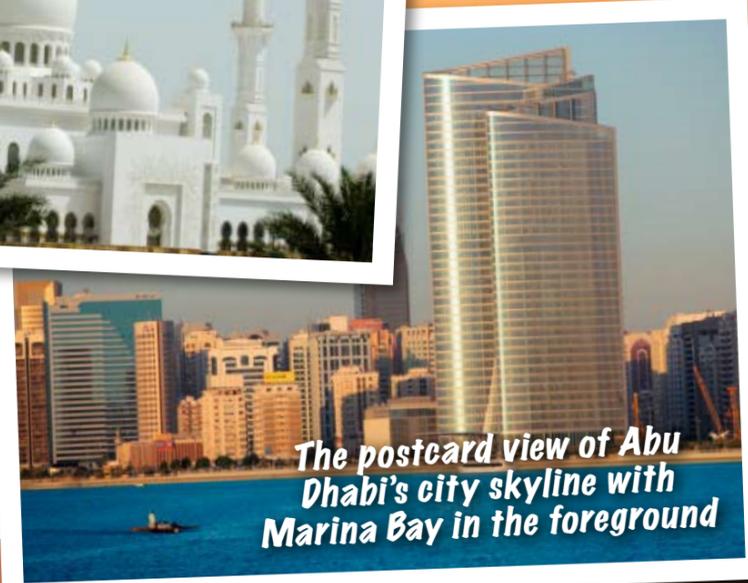
# Justin Timberlake's ABU DHABI

Year-round sun, balmy seas and A-listers? Welcome to the Middle East's hotspot!



'You will see a lot of artists here in the future. I have already been wooed,' said **Justin Timberlake** after his recent visit to Abu Dhabi

Right: A visit to the Grand Mosque is a must – the giant sparkling chandeliers inside are said to have cost \$11.5 million. Below: The white sands and warm waters of Corniche beach



The postcard view of Abu Dhabi's city skyline with Marina Bay in the foreground

**M**ade up of several islands, Abu Dhabi is a neighbour of Dubai and the capital of the United Arab Emirates. 'It is beautiful. I have never seen anything so marvellous,' says *SexyBack* singer Justin Timberlake, who visited the region recently to give a series of open-air concerts.

### So hot right now!

Luxury hotels are popping up at a rate of knots – JT opted for the Emirates Palace, which he describes as 'mind-blowing and pristine', adding, 'The beauty of this place is something to marvel at.' Robert De Niro, Will Smith and Elton John have also stayed there.

### Desert paradise

With year-round sunshine, warm sea temps and desert dunes, Abu Dhabi has plenty to keep you busy. The world's second Louvre museum will open there in 2012 – no wonder it's gaining a reputation as the cultural centre of the Middle East. And with the famous Abu Dhabi Golf Tournament and the Formula One, the region also attracts top sports stars. The Brazilian football team visited, taking time out at the Emirates, and Boris Becker also stopped by.

### What to do

For culture and history, get a guided tour of the new Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan Mosque (or the Grand Mosque for short). The giant 22,412-square-metre building is home to the world's biggest hand-woven Persian carpet, which measures 7119sqm! Spend time at the hotel's beach or join the locals at newly opened Corniche beach. On the water there's fishing or sailing; out in the desert, try 4x4 off-road driving (known to locals as 'dune bashing'), camel safaris or desert picnics. 'I watched the sunset in the desert. It was amazing,' adds JT.

### Where to shop

The city's undergoing major regeneration, so the old souk (market) has closed to make way for a new one. Don't miss the impressive Marina Mall with its crazy water features and 300-odd shops, from Zara to Forever 21 and French favourite Promod, as well as big names Burberry, Louis Vuitton and Gucci.

### Where to party

After dinner, there's the Havana Club at Emirates Palace or make a beeline for the Hilton, where expats gather at Hemingway's, a live jazz bar. The Hilton is also home to the new Cinnabar club, where the city's beautiful people come to party. Live gigs are also a common occurrence. Rocker Jon Bon Jovi joked the band had never played in the UAE before because it was 'a long walk!' 'It took us a long time to get across the desert. It's wonderful to meet people from different parts of the world and find that common thread, music,' he said. **OK!**

**'The beauty of this place is something to marvel at'**

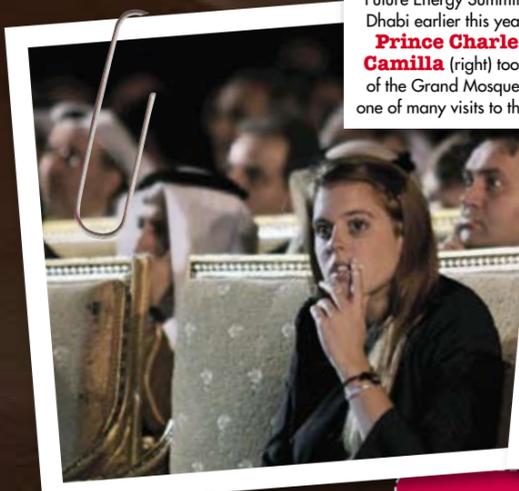
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Above: Shop up a storm at Marina Mall – comfy shoes are a must. Right: Complete with Cuban cigar bar and plush leather sofas, The Havana Club at the Emirates Palace hotel offers a night of sophistication and opulence



Even the Royals are impressed by this city! **Princess Beatrice** (left) was there with her dad Prince Andrew when he spoke at the World Future Energy Summit in Abu Dhabi earlier this year, while **Prince Charles** and **Camilla** (right) took a tour of the Grand Mosque during one of many visits to the capital



### ✈️ Jetset tips

**Flight details:** Etihad Airways flies direct from Sydney to Abu Dhabi starting from \$2114 including taxes, or fly direct from Perth with Singapore Airlines from \$2032 including taxes. Call Travel Associates on 1800 044 066. For info on Abu Dhabi, go to [www.visitabudhabi.ae](http://www.visitabudhabi.ae).

**Stay like a star:** A night in a Coral Room at the Emirates Palace starts at approximately \$750 a night (FYI, Justin had a suite on the sixth floor!). See [www.emiratespalace.com](http://www.emiratespalace.com).

**Stay for a steal:** Rooms at the Al Rawda Arjaan Rotana Suites start from approximately \$275 per night. Check out [www.rotana.com](http://www.rotana.com).

## ABU DHABI CELEBRITY HOTSPOTS

{ Live like your last name's Hilton and book yourself into the following... }



WHERE TO EAT

**CHAMAS**  
Stop off for a Brazilian meat fest (and a caipirinha) at the InterContinental, or try the Sayad seafood restaurant for lobster nachos and glazed local hammour fish.



WHERE TO STAY

**EMIRATES PALACE**  
This grand hotel has manicured gardens, waterfall pools and a white-sand beach (imported from Algeria!). French president Nicolas Sarkozy and former UK prime minister Tony Blair have stayed there.



WHERE TO SPA

**CHI SPA**  
For true indulgence, head to the slinky spa at the Shangri-La Hotel ([www.shangri-la.com](http://www.shangri-la.com)). The Tibetan-inspired sanctuary is the place for top-notch pampering.

