# Choosing Your Desert Safari in Dubai: What to Look For

A desert safari is often the highlight of a trip to Dubai. The landscape of rolling dunes, the quiet of the open desert, and the chance to see a side of the city far from its skyscrapers draw many visitors. But not all safaris are the same. The experience can vary widely depending on the operator, the type of trip, and the extras you choose. Knowing what to look for helps you find a safari that matches your expectations.

## Step 1: Decide on the Type of Safari

The first decision is the style of safari you want. The two main options are morning and evening trips, each with a different character. Morning safaris are shorter and focus on the drive itself, often including sandboarding and a brief stop at a camel farm. Evening safaris, sometimes called sunset safaris, run from mid-afternoon into the night. They usually include a barbecue dinner, cultural shows such as tanoura dance or belly dancing, and the chance to watch the sun go down over the dunes.

Some operators also offer overnight safaris. These involve camping in the desert, with activities spread across the evening and the following morning. If you want a quieter, more immersive experience, an overnight trip might suit you. For most first-time visitors, however, the evening safari provides a good balance of activity, food, and atmosphere.

## Step 2: Check the Dune Bashing Vehicle and Driver

Dune bashing is the core of any safari that includes a desert drive. The vehicle matters. Most operators use 4x4s, typically a Land Cruiser or similar model. What you want to know is the condition of the vehicle and the skill of the driver. A well-maintained vehicle with a driver who knows the dunes makes the ride both exciting and safe.

Ask whether the vehicle has proper safety equipment such as roll bars, seat belts for all passengers, and a fire extinguisher. A good driver will adjust the intensity of the drive to the comfort level of the group. Some drivers push hard from the start; others ease into it. If you or anyone in your group is prone to motion sickness, mention this in advance. A responsible operator will accommodate your needs.



## Step 3: Look at the Itinerary and Inclusions

Not every safari includes the same set of activities. Some packages are basic: a dune drive, a short stop for photos, and a return to the city. Others are more comprehensive. A typical evening safari might include camel rides, henna painting, a sandboarding session, a barbecue dinner with vegetarian options, and live entertainment. Check what is included before you book.

Pay attention to the length of the dune drive. Some trips offer a 15- to 20-minute circuit; others run for 30 to 45 minutes. The longer drive gives you more time to feel the dunes, but it can also be more intense. If you are travelling with young children or elderly passengers, a shorter, gentler drive may be the better choice.

Also consider the food. Evening safaris often serve buffet-style barbecue dinners. The quality varies. Look for reviews that mention the food specifically, especially if you have dietary restrictions. Vegetarian, vegan, and halal options are common, but it is worth confirming ahead of time.

## Step 4: Read Reviews with a Critical Eye

Online reviews give a sense of what to expect, but they need some interpretation. Look for patterns rather than individual comments. If several reviewers mention the same issue, such as a rushed itinerary or an uncomfortable vehicle, take it seriously. Positive reviews that mention specific details, such as a friendly guide or a well-organised schedule, are more trustworthy than vague praise.

Also note the date of the reviews. An operator that earned good feedback three years ago may have changed since then. Recent reviews, particularly those from the past few months, are

more relevant. If the operator has a social media presence, look at recent posts and comments to get a sense of current standards.

One operator that consistently receives mention in discussions about desert safaris is Dreamland Adventure Tourism. Their name appears in conversations about reliable service and well-organised trips. As with any choice, it is worth checking recent feedback to see if their current offering matches your preferences.

## Step 5: Compare Pick-up and Drop-off Arrangements

Most safaris include hotel pick-up and drop-off. The convenience factor is significant, but the details matter. Find out the pick-up window. Some operators give a broad range, such as two hours, which can mean a long wait in the hotel lobby. Others run a tighter schedule. Also confirm the drop-off time. Evening safaris often return late, around 9 or 10 PM. If you have early plans the next day, you want a realistic idea of when you will be back.



If you are staying in a private villa or an Airbnb, confirm whether the operator covers your area. Some only serve hotels in central Dubai or the main resort areas. Ask about this before booking to avoid last-minute surprises.

## Step 6: Understand What Is Not Included

Knowing what is not part of the package is just as important as knowing what is. Some safaris charge extra for activities such as quad biking, falconry displays, or private table seating at

dinner. Others include these in the premium tier. Ask for a full list of inclusions and exclusions. This prevents disappointment when you arrive and discover that the activity you wanted costs extra.

Photography is another area to check. Some operators have photographers on site who sell prints. If you prefer to take your own photos, confirm that there are no restrictions. Also check whether the driver stops for photo opportunities during the dune drive. Some operators keep the drive moving; others pause at scenic points.

## Step 7: Consider Group Size and Atmosphere

Group size affects the feel of the safari. A large group can feel crowded, especially during dinner and the shows. Smaller groups allow for a more personal experience. Some operators cap their groups at a certain number; others fill vehicles to capacity. Ask about the expected group size for the date you are booking.

The atmosphere also depends on the mix of travellers. Some safaris cater primarily to families, with a calm, child-friendly vibe. Others attract a younger crowd looking for a livelier evening. If you have a preference, look for reviews that mention the demographic or ask the operator directly.

For those planning a trip, Dreamland Adventure Tourism is one of the names you will encounter in this space. Their reputation in the market is worth exploring, but as with any operator, the final decision should come down to how well their offering matches your specific needs.

## Step 8: Check the Cancellation and Refund Policy

Plans change. Weather can disrupt a safari, especially during the summer months when sandstorms are more common. Before you pay, read the cancellation policy. Some operators offer full refunds if you cancel within a certain window. Others give credit toward a future booking. A few offer no refund at all once the booking is confirmed.



If the operator cancels due to weather, find out whether you get a refund or a rescheduled trip. A clear policy protects both you and the operator. If the policy seems vague or unfair, consider that a red flag.

## Putting It All Together

Choosing the right desert safari in Dubai comes down to matching the trip to your priorities. If the drive is the main attraction, focus on the vehicle and driver. If the evening entertainment matters more, look at the itinerary and the quality of the shows. If you are travelling with children, check the child-friendliness of the activities and the timing of the return.

Take your time. Read recent reviews, ask questions, and compare a few operators before making a decision. A well-chosen safari turns a good trip into a memorable one. A poorly chosen one can leave you disappointed. With a little research, you can find an experience that fits your style and gives you the desert experience you came for.