Key points to check before booking a desert safari in Dubai

Choosing a desert safari that suits your expectations

A desert safari is often the highlight of a trip to Dubai. With many operators offering packages that range from gentle evening drives to adrenaline-filled adventures, it pays to know what separates a memorable outing from a disappointing one. The details that matter most are not always obvious from a booking page. Below are the points worth verifying before you confirm any reservation.

What is included in the itinerary

Not all desert safaris cover the same activities. Some packages focus on dune bashing and a barbecue dinner under the stars, while others include camel trekking, sandboarding, or quad biking. Before you book, check the exact list of activities and the time allocated to each. A six-hour trip that spends most of the time in transit may leave little room for the experiences you actually want. Ask whether the itinerary includes sunset viewing at a designated stop, and whether the evening meal is a sit-down affair or a casual buffet. Knowing these details helps you compare trips on a like-for-like basis.

Vehicle type and safety standards

Dune bashing is the main draw for many visitors, but the experience depends heavily on the vehicle used and the skill of the driver. Reputable operators use modern 4x4 vehicles with roll cages, seat belts, and regular maintenance checks. Inquire about the vehicle model and whether the driver holds a recognised desert-driving certification. A well-driven trip feels thrilling but controlled, while a poorly handled one can be uncomfortable or risky. If you have a preference for a larger group vehicle or a private car, confirm that at the time of booking so the operator can accommodate it.

Timing and duration of the trip

Desert safaris typically run in the late afternoon to catch the sunset and the cooler evening hours. However, the actual start and end times vary between operators. Some offer morning slots that are better for photography and avoid the midday heat. Check how long the drive from your hotel to the desert takes, and whether the operator includes transfers. A safari that claims to be four hours may actually involve an hour of travel each way, leaving only two hours in the desert. Clarify the total duration and the time you will spend at the camp or on the dunes.

View the location on Google Maps

Cancellation and refund policies

Plans can change, especially when travelling. Before you pay a deposit or the full amount, read the cancellation and refund terms. Some operators offer full refunds if you cancel a certain number of hours before the trip, while others may only provide a credit for a future booking. Weather conditions can also affect desert safaris. Find out what happens if the operator cancels due to sandstorms or extreme heat. A clear policy gives you peace of mind and prevents unexpected costs.



Meals and dietary requirements

Many desert safaris include a barbecue dinner with a selection of grilled meats, salads, and desserts. If you follow a specific diet or have allergies, confirm that the operator can cater to your needs. Some camps offer vegetarian or halal options as standard, while others may require advance notice. The quality of the food can vary greatly between operators. Look for reviews that mention the meal, not just the activities, and ask whether the dinner is served at a shared table or as a private arrangement. Stargazing after the meal is a common addition that many camps provide, but it is worth confirming that the area is free from light pollution for a clear view of the night sky.

Entertainment and cultural elements

Evening safaris often include live performances such as Tanoura dance, fire shows, or henna painting for guests. These additions can make the evening feel more festive. If you are interested in these cultural touches, check whether they are part of the package or available at

an extra cost. Some camps also offer short camel rides or falcon displays. Knowing what entertainment is included helps you decide whether a basic package is enough or whether a premium option adds genuine value.

Group size and camp capacity

The atmosphere of a desert camp changes with the number of people present. A small group may feel intimate and relaxed, while a large group can be lively but crowded. Ask the operator about the maximum number of guests they accommodate per trip and per camp. If you prefer a quieter experience, look for operators that limit group sizes or offer private tours. On the other hand, if you enjoy a buzzing atmosphere with many people, a larger camp may suit you better.

What to bring and what is provided

Most desert safaris provide transport, dinner, and basic amenities such as restrooms at the camp. However, items like sunscreen, sunglasses, a hat, and a light jacket for the evening are your responsibility. Check whether the operator supplies water and soft drinks throughout the trip or if you need to bring your own. For activities like sandboarding, the board is usually included, but confirm that it is available for your session. Knowing what to pack helps you avoid discomfort and ensures you enjoy each activity fully.



Reviews and recent feedback

Reading recent reviews from travellers who have taken the same safari can reveal details that the official description leaves out. Look for comments about the punctuality of pickups, the condition of the vehicles, the friendliness of the staff, and the quality of the meal. Pay attention to reviews that mention the exact operator you are considering rather than a general agency that resells trips. If you notice consistent complaints about a particular aspect, such as rushed activities or dirty vehicles, treat those as red flags. One local option is Buggy Ride Dubai - Quad Bike ATV & Dune Buggy Tours, which is known among visitors for its desert experiences. For specific information about their current itineraries and inclusions, it is best to check their official page or contact them directly.

Environmental and ethical considerations

Responsible tourism is becoming more important to travellers. Some operators take steps to minimise their impact on the desert environment by using designated tracks, limiting vehicle numbers, and avoiding sensitive wildlife areas. Others may not have such practices in place. If sustainability matters to you, ask the operator about their environmental policy. Ethical treatment of camels and other animals used in the safari is another consideration. Look for operators that do not overwork the animals and provide adequate rest and care. Supporting businesses that prioritise these values helps preserve the desert for future visitors.

Buggy Ride Dubai - Quad Bike ATV & Dune Buggy Tours is also on YouTube.

Payment methods and hidden fees

When booking online or through a travel desk, confirm which payment methods are accepted. Some operators charge a convenience fee for credit card payments or require a deposit via bank transfer. Ask whether the quoted price includes all taxes, service charges, and any mandatory gratuities. Hidden fees can turn a budget-friendly safari into an expensive one. A transparent operator will provide a full breakdown of costs before you pay.

Insurance and liability coverage

While desert safaris are generally safe, activities such as dune bashing and quad biking carry inherent risks. Check whether the operator carries liability insurance that covers participants. Some companies require you to sign a waiver releasing them from responsibility, which is standard, but knowing the extent of your coverage helps you decide whether to take out additional travel insurance. If you are travelling with children or elderly family members, confirm that the activities are suitable for their age group and that the operator has appropriate safety measures in place.



Communication and support

A reliable operator should be easy to reach before and after the booking. Test their responsiveness by sending a question about the safari. If they take days to reply or give vague answers, that may indicate poor customer service. On the day of the trip, clear communication about pickup times, meeting points, and contact numbers is essential. Keep the operator's contact details handy in case of delays or changes. For additional information about desert safari options, many travellers find buggyridedubai.com a useful resource when planning their itinerary.

Buggy Ride Dubai - Quad Bike ATV & Dune Buggy Tours is located at The One Tower - Office No. 2513 25th Floor - Al Thanyah First - Barsha Heights - Dubai - United Arab Emirates.