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Anantara World Islands



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30 It's easy to forget what continent you're on when you step off the speedboat transfer at Anantara World Islands (anantara.com), a Thai-inspired luxury resort in the South America section of an artificial island archipelago.

Just a 20-minute boat ride from mainland Dubai, the latest Anantara outpost is the first resort in the emirate's most ambitious island development yet. And with gardens patrolled by peacocks and gin-clear water lapping at golden-sand beaches, it's the most exotic pseudo-

tropical escape you could hope to find so close to the city.

With thatched roofs and minimalist-chic interiors, the resort's 70 rooms, suites and villas (40 with private pools) are quintessential Anantara. But in a nod to the property's location, its two main restaurants showcase flavours from the Mediterranean (Helios) and India and the Middle East (Qamar). South America makes a cameo at elevated tapas bar Luna, where worlds collide as you sip a pisco sour and watch the setting sun cast a glow on the distant Burj Khalifa skyscraper.

While the resort's offering is vast, the experience can feel very personal: one

Dining by Design option involves a private dinner served in a temperature-controlled fibreglass bubble on the beach (go for the seafood barbecue menu). And when you can't be bothered walking back to your room, the resort staff will pick you up in a golf buggy – there are no cars (or roads, for that matter) on the island.

There are water toys, including kayaks and paddleboards, and beach swings to play with, plus the on-site spa, but stays here are perhaps best spent between beach and pool – there's a communal pool shaded by coconut palms if your room doesn't have a private one – in this other-worldly oasis.