

Here we go!

ALL ABOARD FOR #FUNTRIPS TO THIS MONTH'S TOP DESTINATIONS

Our Smile guide

HALAH NASSER



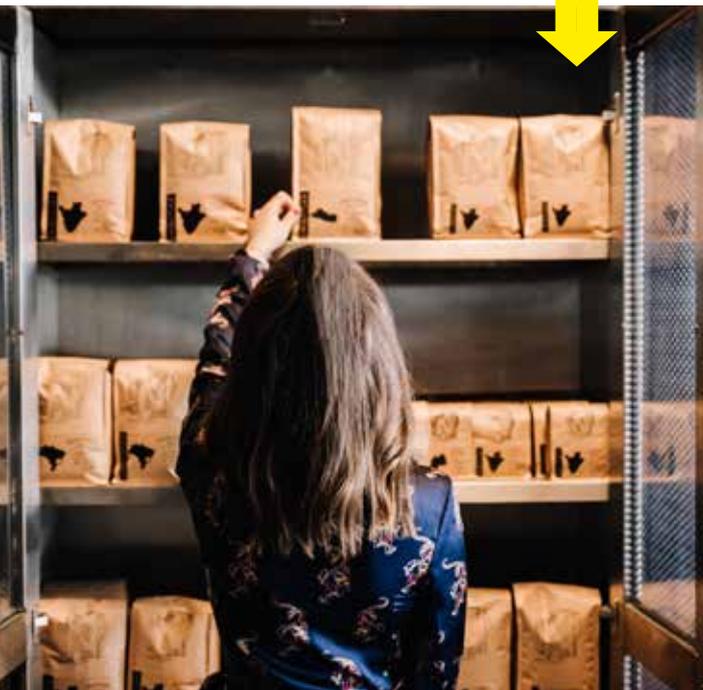
Find more recommendations from Halah at waytoGo.ph

12 hours in...

Alserkal Avenue, Dubai

DUBAI IS A CITY THAT EXISTS IN CLUSTERS — thanks in part to the way businesses are registered and established. You might come across Dubai Knowledge Village (centered around IT and tech), Dubai Media City (centered around publishing), The Sustainable City (centered around eco-friendly set-ups) and more. For Halah Nasser, a Saudi-born Expo 2020 professional and fitness instructor, she's found her home in Al Quoz's Alserkal Avenue, an off-the-beaten-path creative cluster. Converted warehouses — occupied by cafés, art galleries and other lifestyle spaces — make up most of the Avenue, which attracts a cool crowd of foodies and artistically inclined people. Halah, who likes to wander the hub, takes us on a tour.

FOLLOW HALAH AND CHECK OUT THE 'HOOD...



9 AM: Grab a pick-me-up at Nightjar

Operating as a boutique coffee supplier for the better part of the last two years, Nightjar recently opened itself to the public as both an eatery and a roastery — a place to enjoy specialty, artisanal coffee. Its dark interiors, leather-covered wood benches and chrome accents provide the perfect refuge from Dubai's brutally bright mornings. "Part of my enjoyment at the weekends is having good coffee," says Halah. Nightjar retails its fresh, small-batch and sustainably sourced coffee blends in take-home bags — perfect for home brews or gifts for friends. nightjar.coffee

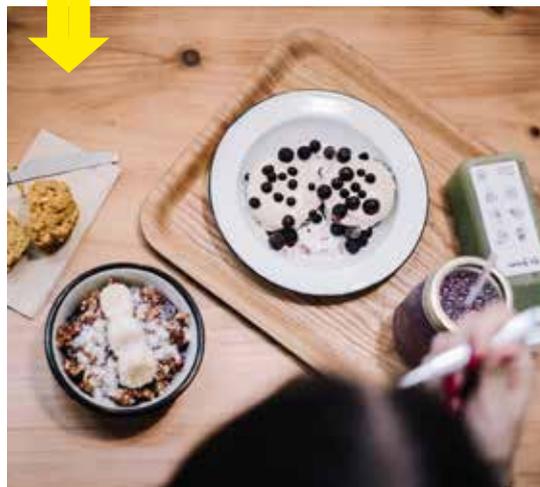


9.30 AM: Work up a sweat at Crank

The first and only fitness studio in Alserkal Avenue, Crank is a brand-new, loft-style spot that attracts a discerning, health-conscious crowd. Post-workout, guests stay in for protein shakes from the bar. "I lead spin classes at Crank. I'd always wanted to be an instructor — it makes me happy," says Halah. "It took some time for me to settle into life here, but now the team is like my family." crank-fit.com

11 AM: Dig into a wholesome brunch at Wild & the Moon

This vegan café offers a menu that includes matcha lattes and dragon fruit, raspberry and quinoa bowls along with guacamole and chips with raw almonds and vegetable crackers. "When I first moved here, I struggled to find vegan and gluten-free food," says Halah, over a blue smoothie. "But my sensitive palate led me to Wild & the Moon and I got hooked. Try the banana bread with cashew cream." wildandthemoon.ae



ART AND ABOUT



THE APARTMENT 6TH EDITION AT LA GALERIE NATIONALE

Until Mar 1
Enter a time warp where expert dealers and collectors show off a curated selection of art and furniture — by lauded artists like Mathieu Matégot and Charlotte Perriand — that recalls interior design of the '50s, '60s and '70s. galerie-nationale.com



FERNANDO BOTERO: A STILL LIFE RETROSPECTIVE AT CUSTOT GALLERY DUBAI

Until Feb 10
With 30 works — created between 1980 and 2018 — that display everyday objects like fruits, flowers and musical instruments, renowned Colombian artist Fernando Botero's collection celebrates the art of the Old Masters, like Rembrandt and Leonardo da Vinci. custotgallerydubai.ae



1 PM: Broaden the mind at the free galleries

Head to the Third Line to view modern works by local and international Middle Eastern artists, then visit the Custot Gallery Dubai for regularly changing exhibits. "These minimalist galleries are inspirational," says Halah, who herself has a following on a book-focused Instagram page (@haloslibrary). "I take visiting friends to the galleries for new perspectives." alserkalavenue.ae



Meet Paul Frangie, founder of Hapi

Why the mixed space?

I wanted to create a place where the community could eat, move and play.

What should first-timers try?

Our soft-serve ice cream – we've been known for that.

What about the coffee?

Hapi supports Raw Coffee, one of Dubai's best local roasters. We also have the popular Barn coffee from Berlin. I'm quite proud of our selections.

3 PM: Snag coffee and light lunch at the multifunctional Hapi

This airy café combines a yoga studio, a parkour course and incredible comfort food, all in one space. "They cater for different dietary requirements and they do it so well – I'm always coming back for the coconut ice cream," says Halah. Hapi's industrial design – think broad concrete surfaces and wood and metal furniture – encourages yoga and parkour students, or even just casual visitors, to relax and fuel up before they go. instagram.com/hapi.ae



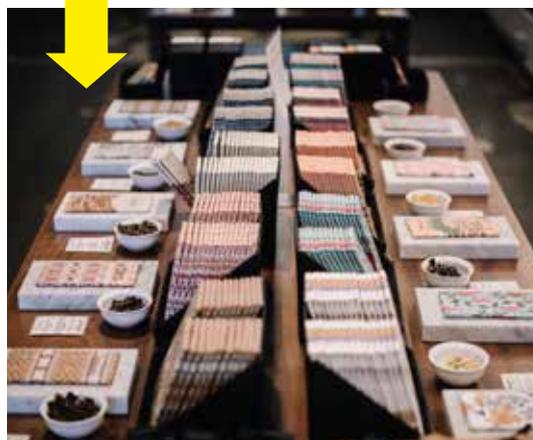
4 PM: Get the creative juices flowing at the Jam Jar

Popular with Dubai's crafty community is the Jam Jar, a community space that offers a mix of themed workshops and regular drop-in painting sessions. Simply grab a canvas (a set of canvas and paints starts at AED89.25, or about ₱1,270) and have a go. "My line of work enables me to work with a lot of young, vibrant people, and I think because of that, I was really intrigued by this lively, interactive space. Anyone can come in and start painting – it's all good fun." thejamjardubai.com



6 PM: Indulge your sweet tooth at Mirzam

Home-grown chocolate maker Mirzam — named after a star that was significant in navigational astronomy among the early spice traders — creates its bespoke chocolate with just three ingredients: cacao beans, cocoa butter and unrefined cane sugar. “Try the 62% cocoa bar with orange and cinnamon — I can’t get enough of it,” says Halah. Mirzam is known for its many vegan and gluten-free flavors, which are inspired by cuisines in the region. Their award-winning 62% cocoa bar with dates and fennel, for example, is inspired by an Emirati jam. And if you’re not already sold on their delicious chocolate, Mirzam gets local artists to create eye-catching wrappers that reflect starry designs and geometric motifs. Samples are free but the bars start from AED34 (about ₱485) a pop. mirzam.com



7.30 PM: Enjoy dinner and an arthouse movie at Cinema Akil

After a day’s explorations, round things off with a light dinner — the turmeric sweet potato wedges and salad is highly recommended — at the new, single-screen Cinema Akil. “From a successful pop-up, Cinema Akil has turned into a permanent establishment. The theater experience here is different; I actually love the food and seating,” says Halah with a laugh. Besides repurposing chairs that were salvaged from a cinema that had to be closed down, Cinema Akil differentiates itself with a rotating line-up that includes singalong nights (to musicals), Cinemini showcases (for the little ones) and film festival tie-in screenings. Tickets — from AED52.50 (about ₱745; free seating) — may be purchased online or at the box office. There are usually two films a night — check online before you go. cinemaakil.com



CHECK IN

ZABEEL HOUSE MINI

Although it’s a 20-minute drive from Al Quoz, this just-opened design hotel captures the neighborhood’s love of art and all things quirky. Wire statues of animals hang on swings in the lobby, while airy rooms have slogans on the walls and bright pops of color. It’s cheerful, creative and worth the transit time. zabeelhouse.com

HOTEL IBIS AL BARSHA

With cozy rooms and a location near both Mall of the Emirates and Alserkal Avenue, this affordable hotel is great for travelers who want to maximize their time and budget. There’s also a well-reviewed restaurant downstairs for all your dining needs. accorhotels.com



We have more to recommend in Dubai at waytogo.ph