

## Taste of the traditional



Reviewed by Iolo Roberts

For an authentic Middle Eastern experience, look no further than Al Arish.

Nestled next to the fish market you're guaranteed the freshest in fish – and also the finest in local cuisine. Warm and welcoming, the restaurant is decorated in the style of a Bedouin tent – authentic, without the tacky lean towards tourism.

Authentic touches aside; perhaps rather an unusual and mesmerising touch is a glass top table with an aquarium beneath (naturally), to dine at. Thankfully, none of the fish are on the menu. There's no need for the aquarium to be put on the menu; with plenty of choice from a fresh selection of locally caught fish on offer.

If you're not sold on the seafood, even after watching it cooked through an open window into the kitchen area, then a number of dishes from the open buffet provide a perfect alternative.

Diners can feast on spicy meat and bean Harira from Morocco, perfectly prepared lamb biryani, Thareed (a local lamb and vegetable dish) and much more; they all fare well on the taste buds. The star on the menu? A wonderfully fresh and flavoursome Emirati chicken dish called Madroubah.

Dessert choices are unmissable. A traditional favourite, the Egyptian dessert Um Ali, is a winner. With the simplest of ingredients, it's similar to bread and butter pudding – only much tastier, and sweeter. Round the feast off with a cup of Arabian coffee flavoured with cardamom.

Unlike other eateries where you could perhaps find yourself in any part of the world, in Al Arish, you know you are dining in the Middle East. And dining well.

**What?** Al Arish

**Where?** Next to the fish market, dhow shipyard, mina port

**Cost:** Set open buffet costs AED 175 per person.

**Why?** A big crowd of diners will make this venue really shine; Al Arish is made for a lively atmosphere

**Why not?** Don't take the all you can eat buffet too literally; as tempting as it is, you'll never fit into your clothes again

**We say:** Leave the hotel restaurants of Abu Dhabi behind and try real Middle Eastern cuisine

**Contact:** 02 673 2266