

# A desert feast

On a recent trip to The Empty Quarter, *BBC Good Food Middle East* experienced the beauty of Anantara's Qasr Al Sarab Desert Resort. Three star Michelin chef Eric Martinet took us through the menu

Situated amidst an expanse of golden red sand dunes, Qasr Al Sarab is a five-star luxury resort that has been created to celebrate the culture and traditions of the United Arab Emirates. With architecture inspired by the Emirati forts and Bedouin artefacts, antique furniture and Middle Eastern art lining the interiors, Qasr Al Sarab is an exciting adventure for the history buff or the traveller in need of some luxurious relaxation.

The undulating ever-changing dunes set the scene for your gourmet experience. From international cuisine with an Oriental focus to Emirati cuisine in a Bedouin tent, the restaurants at Qasr Al Sarab provide a journey for the palate under the expertise of three Michelin star chef Eric Martinet. As executive head chef of the resort, Martinet has the challenge of overseeing a team of international chefs working across a variety of styles of cuisine.

"The concept and atmosphere of the restaurants was in place before I arrived and I tailored the menu to suit the spirit of the resort," says Martinet.

You can enjoy all day dining at Al Waha restaurant that features live cooking stations and a buffet of Middle Eastern and international cuisine, highlighted by a few Emirati dishes. The impressive breakfast includes local and imported fruits, a mountain of beautifully baked goods amongst other cooked

breakfast options. Lunch and dinner includes succulent skewers of herb-infused lamb and a number of Bedouin dishes such as tagines soaked in fruit and braised meats.

Nothing epitomises a culture more than its food as the flavours tell the story of recipes passed down from generations and the ingredients give you an idea of the fresh produce available in the region. With a desire to recreate authentic Emirati cuisine, Qasr Al Sarab presents the Bedouin Tent Dinner, which is an experience of local cuisine while seated in an Arabic tent. Guests can sit lounge-style on the tent floor and enjoy national delicacies cooked on an open flame. After dinner, you can enjoy shisha round the fire while an Oud player entertains.

"The tent is a purely Bedouin experience, it is not a five star experience, but we tried to create an authentic experience. The food is real Emirati cuisine. My Arabic chef is Emirati and we have tried to stick to what is truly authentic," says Martinet.

Suhail restaurant is a relaxing dining option that can be enjoyed al fresco on the open terrace. Inspired by the Mediterranean, you can enjoy fresh seafood and fine cuts of meat from all over the world. This is the perfect setting for dinner under a starlit sky.

Celebrating local cuisine within an international context, the dining options at Qasr Al Sarab will be a highlight of your stay at this beautiful resort in the dunes.

