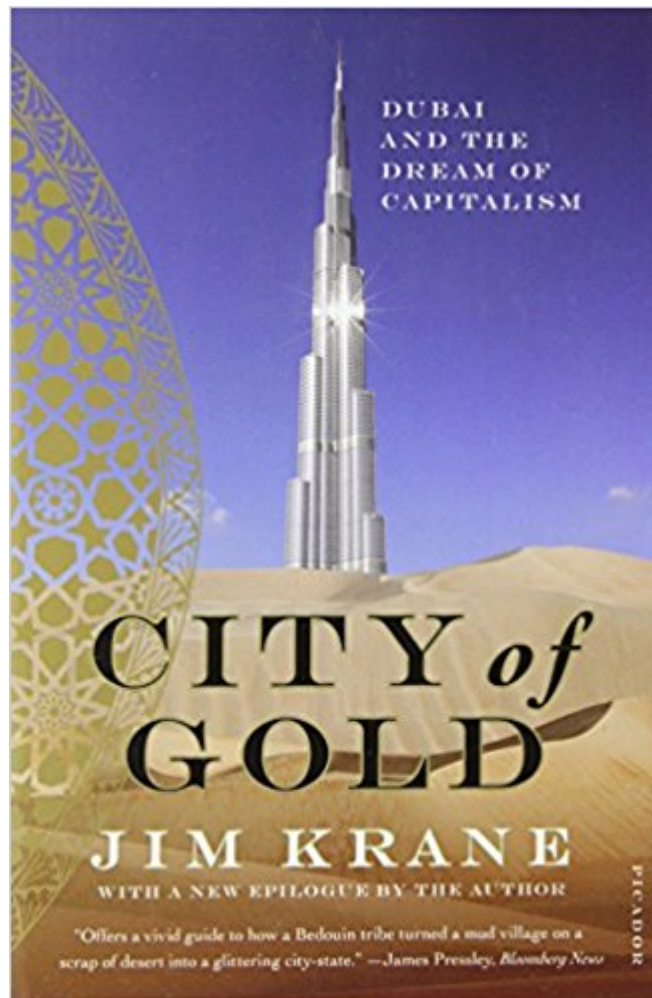




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# City Of Gold: Dubai And The Dream Of Capitalism



## Synopsis

Award-winning journalist Jim Krane charts the history of Dubai from its earliest days, considers the influence of the family who has ruled it since the nineteenth century, and looks at the effect of the global economic downturn on a place that many tout as a blueprint for a more stable Middle East. The city of Dubai, one of the seven United Arab Emirates, is everything the Arab world isn't: a freewheeling capitalist oasis where the market rules and history is swept aside. Until the credit crunch knocked it flat, Dubai was the fastest-growing city in the world, with a roaring economy that outpaced China's while luring more tourists than all of India. It's one of the world's safest places, a stone's throw from its most dangerous. In *City of Gold*, Jim Krane, who reported for the AP from Dubai, brings us a boots-on-the-ground look at this fascinating place by walking its streets, talking to its business titans, its prostitutes, and the hard-bitten men who built its fanciful skyline. He delves into the city's history, paints an intimate portrait of the ruling Maktoum family, and ponders where the city is headed. Dubai literally came out of nowhere. It was a poor and dusty village in the 1960s. Now it's been transformed into the quintessential metropolis of the future through the vision of clever sheikhs, Western capitalists, and a river of investor money that poured in from around the globe. What has emerged is a tolerant and cosmopolitan city awash in architectural landmarks, luxury resorts, and Disneyfied kitsch. It's at once home to America's most prestigious companies and universities and a magnet for the Middle East's intelligentsia. Dubai's dream of capitalism has also created a deeply stratified city that is one of the world's worst polluters. Wild growth has clogged its streets and left its citizens a tiny minority in a sea of foreigners. Jim Krane considers all of this and casts a critical eye on the toll that the global economic downturn has taken. While many think Dubai's glory days have passed, insiders like Jim Krane who got to know the city and its creators firsthand realize there's much more to come in the City of Gold, a place that, in just a few years, has made itself known to nearly every person on earth.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. The modern city-state of Dubai exists largely because two men willed it so. Through a combination of prescient investment of resources, grandiose vision and the freedoms of absolute rule, the late Sheikh Rashid and his son (and current ruler) Sheikh Mohammed transformed the backwater village into a global powerhouse erupting onto the earth. Mohammed's ideas are so stamped on the landscape that two of his poems are being written on the sea as a group of [artificial] islands. Dubai-based journalist Krane does a superb job of conveying the near-manic atmosphere swirling around the creation of the world's tallest building (half a mile high), first indoor ski slope (in a mall) and—incidentally—the world's largest carbon footprint, revealing the creativity and tolerance that characterize a city where 95% of its residents are foreigners, as well as the inevitable costs of such lavish ambition. Environmental needs have been ignored (another island was built atop a coral reserve, and migrant laborers and sex workers face routine abuse and exploitation. A fascinating study of a small nation that has taken the ideas of modernization and capitalism to their outer limits. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Far and away the best book on modern Dubai, packed with fascinating insights and offering a sympathetic but balanced account of the city's huge successes--and occasional failures. Krane systematically tackles pretty much every important aspect of Dubai's past and present, with absorbing accounts of the city's history and the personalities and achievements of its charismatic rulers through to vexed contemporary issues such as human-rights abuses and environmental concerns, condensing a vast amount of detail into a compellingly readable roller coaster of a narrative." • "Offers a vivid guide to how a Bedouin tribe turned a mud village on a scrap of desert into a glittering city state." • "This landmark work is recommended to those interested in the history, politics, and economics of the Middle East; an excellent choice for anyone who wishes to

learn more about Dubai. [Library Journal](#) "A fascinating study of a small nation that has taken the ideas of modernization and capitalism to their outer limits. Publishers Weekly (starred review) "Examines this small emirate with admirable evenhandedness and good humor . . . Krane also writes movingly of the conditions of the Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi workers who have built Dubai. [Financial Times \(UK\)](#) "The author hits his stride when he assesses Dubai's current ruler, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. He proceeds to examine this small emirate with admirable even-handedness and good humor. But Krane also writes movingly of the conditions of the Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi workers who have built Dubai. [The Atlantic](#) "The history of a little Emirate's epic transformation, from an impoverished pearling enclave to the shining city on the hill, is revealed in full detail. Jim Krane is a great reporter, whose journalistic credentials are brought to bear in this unique work that is infused with facts, ample history, emotion, and stunning narratives. He leads his audience into the nooks and crannies of the 'unknown' Dubai, to reveal the humanity and intrigue that pulsates beneath the surface. He shows how powerful persons with a global reach collaborated to build an economic gem out of the desert. This is a fast-moving Arabian tale, but very much a modern one; not only laden with facts, it is a guidebook and cautionary tale for other developing nations in their quest to rapidly achieve the Western dream. [Justin Dargin, Harvard University, author of Desert Dreams and The Dolphin Project: The Development of a Gulf Gas Initiative](#) "Dubai is fortunate to have as skilled and passionate a chronicler as Jim Krane. The city leaps off these pages with panache, brassiness, splendor, and suffering. There is no better book about Dubai, and there may never be. [Jon Alterman, director of the Middle East program at CSIS, author of The Vital Triangle: China, the United States, and the Middle East](#) "How did one of the planet's last unexplored wastelands, for millennia ignored by history, become in just a few short decades the playground of the unimaginably rich? In *City of Gold*, Jim Krane traces the fascinating and long overlooked history of Dubai, from pirate battles and eccentric British explorers to the glittering spires of a metropolis that emerged from nowhere, in prose as spare and enchanting as a desert fairy tale. [James Hider, Middle East correspondent for The Times \(London\), author of The Spiders of Allah: Travels of an Unbeliever on the Frontline of Holy War](#) "A marvelous book. Beautifully written! Jim Krane has written a fascinating account of a Middle East we rarely get to hear about. Jim Krane's book on Dubai's rise and fall--in this era of global financial crisis--is a cautionary tale for us all. [Lourdes Garcia-Navarro, NPR's Middle East correspondent](#)"

This is a well written, concise, very readable and fascinating portrait of Dubai and the United Arab Emirates. Although I understand that its sale has been banned in Dubai, it strikes me as a very complimentary/upbeat portrayal of what has been achieved in the desert. Krane does not ignore the social issues such as the poor treatment of labor and lack of political freedom. But the overall judgement is that the Al-Maktoum family has repeatedly taken huge, gutsy bets that have paid off big. We have them to thank for one of the world's most modern, efficient and livable cities -- certainly in this part of the world. This book really hits the mark.

I just finished reading Jim Krane's "City of Gold" book about Dubai. Having spent a fair amount of time in the Middle East and having written a bit about the region myself, I found "City of Gold" to be highly informative, thoughtful, balanced in perspective, and well worth the read. Fascinating topic and hard to put down...I highly recommend this book. In fact, I found myself searching to see if Mr. Krane had an updated edition, but unfortunately it appears not at present. Four or five years after the greatest global financial meltdown since the 1930's, and Dubai being one of the greatest growth stories of the past 20 years, we need an update on how Dubai has fared. Seems like there could be multiple new chapters - at least two on the financial meltdown itself and how it impacted Dubai, another chapter on what Dubai and its leaders have learned from it, another chapter on the new building projects Dubai is proposing and now unleashing...the massive replica Taj Mahal, MBR City, an island that will house the world's largest ferris wheel, new malls, Dubai's bid for World Expo 2020, et al. Plus another chapter on what is happening in the development of the arts in Dubai...for example, Dubai had its first homegrown big budget film (City of Life) a few years back that drew considerable international attention. The Dubai growth story is getting back on track, and this is a city we need to keep an eye on. Mr. Krane seems the writer most likely to give us a thoughtful and balanced update. Anyone out there know whether an updated edition might be in the works?

When traveling to a new country for work for an extended period of time, I try to read a book or two that provides some historical and cultural context to the place. It's nice to get some grounding on the place I'm visiting, and I've found this contributes both to my enjoyment of the locale and also my understanding of the people I'm working and interacting with. For the first-timer to Dubai, I don't think you could do much better than this book. The author is clearly fascinated by his subject matter, and brings passion and deep expertise to his writing. Mr. Krane presents Dubai through the eyes of a reporter, providing first-hand interviews from the men and women behind the scenes in Dubai, and

presenting several facets of the key aspects of the city. Rather than a puff piece or agenda-driven slash job, the author presents the positives and negatives of Dubai's breakneck development and allows the reader to form their own conclusions at the benefit of his research and commentary. While it's missing the details of Dubai's economic crash, it certainly gives one the grounding to make more sense of Dubai's chances for the future. Aside from a jab or two at former US President GW Bush, which seems a bit hackneyed and trite in 2012, the book was well-researched and unbiased, and managed the difficult task of remaining entertaining rather than reading like a graduate thesis. I was unable to set the book down, and found my evening walks through Dubai complemented by each chapter I read. The only flaw I found was several photographs are mentioned in the acknowledgments, but none appear in the Kindle edition of the book, although they would not have been missed unless one read the end notes. For the casual observer, it's tempting to dismiss Dubai as the "Las Vegas of the Middle East," but Mr. Krane provides a deeper, more nuanced view of this fascinating place. Beneath the shiny buildings there are subtle undercurrents, and I found each chapter of this book provided a welcome exposure to yet another facet of the City of Gold.

I was attending a conference in Dubai. This book was an enjoyable read that helped me prepare for my visit. Although it is a little out of date finishing in 2009 as Dubai sunk into recession it did assist me to understand what I was about to experience. Without reading this book I would not have been able to critically evaluate what I was observing. It also helped me admire the planning, commitment and decision making that got Dubai to where it is in such a relatively short time

I read this book before and even during my visit to the UAE while lying on Jumeirah Beach at Dubai Marina. My friends were amazed by the anecdotes and insights I shared with them about the city during our stay. Historically, economically, politically, religiously, and culturally... there really is nothing like Dubai anywhere in the world and I thought the author did a great job of pulling it together and telling the story in an engaging and interesting manner. Though published in 2009, the content did not feel dated to me though I read the book in February 2014.

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