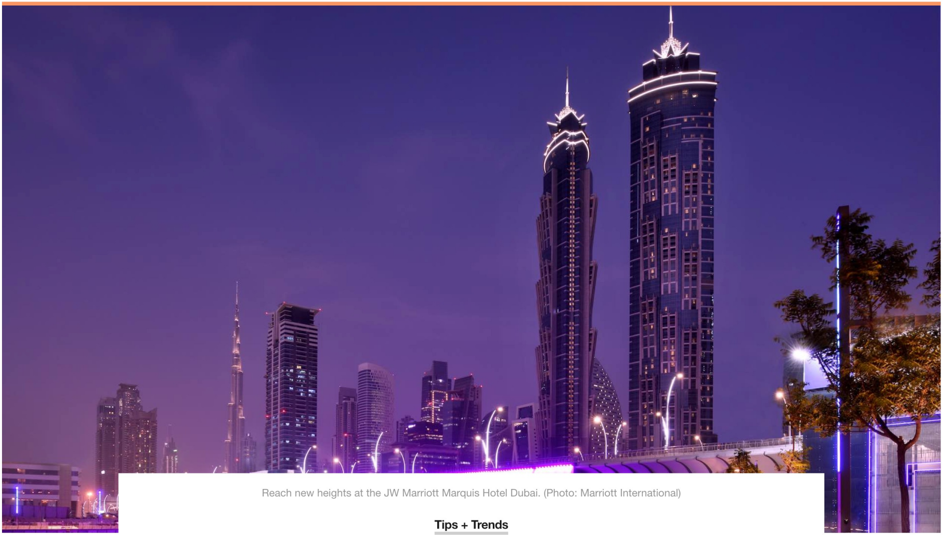


Reach new heights at the JW Marriott Marquis Hotel Dubai. (Photo: Marriott International)

**Tips + Trends**

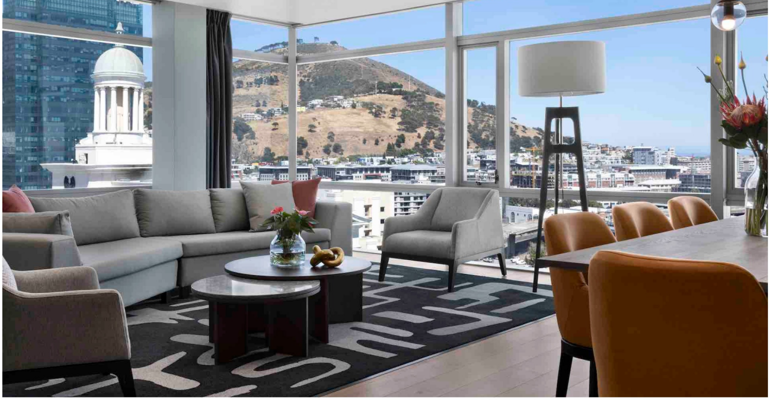
# Where to Travel Next? Use Points at the Top-Redeemed Hotels in the Middle East and Africa

*By Kwin Mosby*

When you ponder where to redeem your Marriott Bonvoy points, the possibilities may seem endless, right? Should you check into an exclusive desert oasis with private beach access, stay in a hotel in view of one of the Seven Wonders of the World, or opt for luxurious accommodations just minutes away from one of the Middle East's bustling city centers?

To help you decide, check out this top 10 list of members' favorite hotels for redeeming points across the Middle East and Africa (based on 2019 redemption data). As always, check for travel restrictions and closures before planning your trip.

### 10. The Westin Cape Town; Cape Town, South Africa



(Photo: Marriott International)

This five-star hotel awes guests with epic views of the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront, Table Mountain and the waters of Table Bay. You'll rest well in a Heavenly Bed before heading out to explore Cape Town's nearby sights. When you return to the hotel, head to the 19th-floor rooftop to swim in the indoor or outdoor pools, or take in waterfront views while enjoying a spa treatment.

After dark, sate yourself at one of the hotel's restaurants and bars. Savor the flavors of South Africa with a meal at Thirty7 Showkitchen, or soak in vistas of Convention Square and the canal as you dine at Louie B's.

## 9. Protea Hotel by Marriott Ikeja Select; Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria

(Photo: Marriott International)

Looking for a low-key hotel where your to-do list is to chill and relax? Unwind in the quiet suburb of Ikeja. Every room is tailored to suit your travel style with thoughtful amenities such as international plug points just in case you forget your travel adaptor.

The on-site restaurant, Ikeja Select Restaurant, serves up a blend of local and international cuisines. But no worries: If you need to burn off those extra calories, you can head to the 24-hour fitness center or swim a couple of laps in the outdoor pool — also open 24/7.

## 8. Marriott Mena House, Cairo; Cairo, Eygpt

(Photo: Marriott International)

When you walk into this five-star hotel, you'll feel like a VIP — and understandably so, as it serves as a popular respite for celebrities and dignitaries. Slip into modern luxury in guest rooms that feature marble bathrooms and private balconies — some with a view of the Giza pyramid complex.

You're also a quick jaunt from the Sphinx, Cairo University and the Egyptian Museum. After a day of sightseeing, head back to the hotel for dinner at the Moghul Room.

## 7. Grosvenor House, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Dubai; Dubai, UAE

HABTOOR GRAND

(Photo: Marriott International)

Unwind in the Grosvenor House's luxurious twin towers while gazing upon the azure Dubai Marina below. This luxe, five-star hotel has 750 rooms, suites and apartments, as well as the B/Attitude Spa, chic restaurants and access to a private beach at Le Royal Méridien Beach Resort & Spa.

You're located in the center of everything, and a quick walk away from Media City, home to a large open-air amphitheater for outdoor entertainment. It's also a popular spot for students because of its alfresco cafés, green space and the lake — ideal for a casual picnic.

## 6. AC Hotel Cape Town Waterfront; Cape Town, South Africa

(Photo: Marriott International)

Check into this hotel and you'll have the urge to snap 'Gram-worthy photos of your impressive view of iconic Table Mountain, Lion's Head and Signal Hill. You're only minutes from the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront, so spend the day there checking out 450 shops, as well as restaurants.

Engage in popular activities, including stand-up paddleboarding lessons, mini-golf and sailing, or stop by the Cape Comedy Club for some laughs. Afterward, refuel at the hotel with tasty tapas as you sample the best handcrafted spirits in the city.

## 5. Accra Marriott Hotel; Accra, Ghana

(Photo: Marriott International)

Can you say “stress-free travel”? Get ready to explore Ghana, the “Gateway to West Africa,” with ease. Kotoka International Airport is less than a mile away from the Accra Marriott Hotel, and as a guest, you can hop into the hotel’s complimentary airport shuttle upon arrival. The city center is only a short drive away from the property, as well.

Talk to the concierge about visiting attractions like Bojo Beach, Aburi Botanical Gardens and the James Town Lighthouse, or indulge at Pantita Thai Massage and Spa. Of course, you can still hang out at the hotel and stay fit in the gym, lounge by the outdoor pool or sample the food at the three on-site restaurants.

## 4. Al Maha, a Luxury Collection Desert Resort & Spa, Dubai; Dubai, UAE

(Photo: Marriott International)

Set within the lush palm groves, emerald canopies and iconic sand dunes of the Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve, this private resort is just 45 minutes from the heart of Dubai.

Embark on a horseback ride, camel trek or nature walk while you embrace the secluded tranquility and check out the dramatic landscape, including the iconic Al Hajar Mountains.

Go on a desert safari, practice archery and falconry, or just take a dip in the private swimming pools of this five-star hotel. End the perfect day with a sophisticated alfresco dinner at Al Diawaan while you watch the sun set over the reserve.

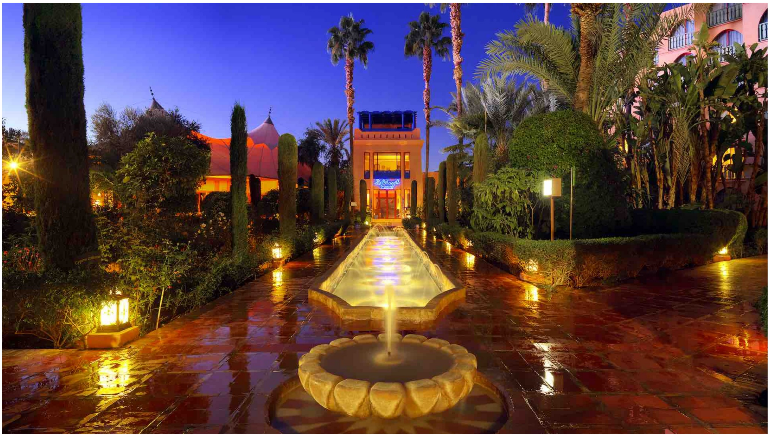
## 3. Sheraton Grand Hotel, Dubai; Dubai, UAE

(Photo: Marriott International)

A stay in this 54-story hotel, which rises up along the iconic Sheikh Zayed Road, is the perfect way to experience Dubai's excess — in fact, you might want to consider upgrading your room here to a one- to three-bedroom apartment.

Discover holistic wellness at Soul Wellness & Spa, swim laps in the rooftop pool and get swept away by gastronomical palate pleasers served at six restaurants. You'll enjoy easy access to the city's popular sights, such as the Dubai Mall and the Gold and Spice souks. And don't forget to snap a selfie in front of the Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the world. It's worthy of an Instagram post.

## 2. Le Méridien N'Fis; Marrakech, Morocco



(Photo: Marriott International)

Unlock the best of Morocco when you stay at this stylish resort hotel located in the Menara District of Marrakech. You'll be minutes away from the local attractions, including Jamaa el-Fna Square, Menara Mall and golf courses.

Back at the hotel, you have access to a fitness center, two swimming pools and outdoor tennis courts. Rejuvenate you mind, body and spirit with signature Moroccan treatments at the spa.

Hungry yet? Tempt your palate with Mediterranean fare at Le Jasmin Restaurant and discover authentic local Moroccan cuisine at Le Riad Restaurant.

## 1. JW Marriott Marquis Hotel Dubai; Dubai, UAE

(Photo: Marriott International)

There's no better way to marvel at downtown Dubai's futuristic skyscrapers than from a vantage point at the JW Marriott Marquis Hotel Dubai, which soars up 72 floors in their midst. With elegant rooms, unique art, attentive service and more than a dozen restaurants offering globe-spanning cuisine, this hub invites members to swim in the pool, dine on the terrace and then embark on a night on the town — or stay in sipping cocktails at its many chic bars.

## HONORABLE MENTION:

*Honorable mention properties see a higher-than-average percentage of Marriott Bonvoy members redeeming points to stay there.*

## The Ritz-Carlton Ras Al Khaimah, Al Hamra Beach; Ras Al Khaimah, UAE

Whisk yourself — and maybe a significant other — away to this secluded oasis in the Arabian Gulf. Check into one of 32 luxury villas; each one has a private pool and direct access to the beach.

Love the outdoors? Explore the nature reserve at the sister property, Ras Al Khaimah, Al Wadi Desert; play 18 holes at the Al Hamra Golf Club, or consider a sea-inspired spa treatment. As night falls, settle in for a sophisticated seafood dinner at the Shore House, which overlooks the coastline.