



The all-night-party itinerary

6pm: Assemble the troops

Gather your mates at home for a few winter warmers before you hit the town. Make sure the fridge is well stocked, and tell your wannabe DJ pal to have the playlist ready.

8pm: Grab one in a local pub

Get the evening started by heading for a quick drink in a traditionally buzzing bar – our favourites include Double

Decker at the Al Murooj Rotana (04 321 1111) and the Crown & Lion at the Byblos Hotel in TECOM (04 448 8000). Remember, on NYE it's always worth ringing your local in advance to confirm their door policy and make sure you can get in without a ticket.

9pm: Shawarma stop, pronto

You'll need to line your stomach to make it through the evening. Our favourite stop-offs include Shawermama, behind Mall of the Emirates (04 453 4704), and Automatic in JBR (04 434 2355) – the latter also has outlets in Bur Dubai, Deira, Jumeirah Beach Centre, Sheikh Zayed Road and Uptown Mirdif.



10pm: Hit the club

It may seem a tad early, but by the time you've queued to get in and braved the hordes at the bar, you'll thank us for the forward planning. You'll usually need to buy tickets in advance – check our list of the biggest nights in town on the opposite page.

Midnight: Make a resolution

With any luck, your chosen venue will have fireworks, renditions of Auld Lang Syne and a friendly face nearby. Take a moment to reflect on 2011 before getting back on the dancefloor.

2.30pm: Brave a last-minute dash to a late-night club

At the time of going to press, only a few venues were advertising a post-3am finish. If your chosen party is drawing to a close, now's the time to make a last-minute dash to the Black & White party at Club Sensation at the Crown Plaza on Sheikh Zayed Road (04 331 1111).

4.30am: Refuel at a late-night restaurant

Do yourself a favour and eat again. Finding somewhere open isn't always easy, but we recommend hitting BurgerFuel opposite the Hilton Jumeirah at JBR (04 445 8220), which is open until 5am, or Zaroob on Sheikh Zayed Road (04 327 6060), which offers 24-hour home delivery.



The party starter

As one of the biggest DJs in the world, Armin van Buuren knows a good party. Ahead of his headline slot at Dubai World Trade Centre on December 31, we asked the 34-year-old Dutch DJ how to make sure New Year's Eve goes off with a bang.

What makes a good New Year's Eve?

New Year's Eve is always funny – it isn't my favourite night. Everyone gets over-excited at midnight and by 1am the atmosphere is lost. But I know in Dubai we can reduce that.

What's your ideal way to spend the night?

In Holland our tradition is to watch comedians on TV, then go out with friends and family, although I haven't done that since 1997.

So why are you working this year?

I haven't been to Dubai for a while and I had a really good time when I played in the city for New Year's Eve in 2009. The crowds were absolutely crazy – not that other crowds are bad, but Dubai's clubbers have that little bit extra. That's why I'm not playing LA, or New York, or London on New Year's Eve.

You've got some competition this time: you're playing on the same night as British trance group Above & Beyond.

It's a shame. I'm not in Dubai to compete with Above & Beyond, I'm there to please my fans.

What's your best memory of 2011?

The birth of my baby daughter, Fenna.

2011 also saw the 500th episode of your radio show, A State of Trance, which has more listeners than any other show in the world. Why do you think it captures the imagination?

If you listen to *A State of Trance*, you'll hear 70 to 80 per cent of the tunes that matter. Everything evolves around my radio show – it keeps me on my toes, and means my DJ sets change every week.

What is the 'state of trance' in 2011?

It's a very good year – it's so alive right now, with so much new talent. The sound of trance is still true to its origins. Trance is not commercial any more and that's cool because it means trance is going back to its roots.

Anyone you'd like to work with in 2012?

It's just name dropping. I could drop you some names, but for me it's about the song, not the name. Enya, Bono, Bryan Adams – there you go, they're all amazing vocalists, but if it's not a good track I'll send it back.

Armin van Buuren plays DWTC on December 31. www.timeouttickets.com