

BAHRAIN

The **Kingdom of Bahrain** (literally: **Kingdom of the Two Seas**) is an Arabic island country in the Persian Gulf ruled by the Al Khalifa royal family. Saudi Arabia lies to the west and is connected to Bahrain by the King Fahd Causeway, which officially opened on 25 November 1986. Qatar is to the southeast across the Gulf of Bahrain. The planned Qatar–Bahrain Friendship Bridge will link Bahrain to Qatar as the longest fixed link in the world.

History

Pre-Islamic

Bahrain has been inhabited since ancient times. Its strategic location in the Persian Gulf has brought rule and influence from the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, and the Arabs, under whom the island became Islamic. Bahrain may have been associated with *Dilmun* which is mentioned by Mesopotamian civilizations.

Islamic conversion

In 899 AD, a millenarian Ismaili sect, the Qarmatians, seized the country and sought to create a utopian society based on reason and the distribution of all property evenly among the initiates. The Qarmatians were defeated in 976 AD by the Abbasids. The final end of the Qarmatians came at the hand of the Arab Uyunid dynasty of al-Hasa, who took over the entire Bahrain region in 1076

Geography

Bahrain is a generally flat and arid archipelago, consisting of a low desert plain rising gently to a low central escarpment, in the Persian Gulf, east of Saudi Arabia. The highest point is the 134 m (440 ft) Jabal ad Dukhan. Bahrain has a total area of 665 km² (257 sq mi), which is slightly larger than the Isle of Man, though it is smaller than the nearby King Fahd International Airport near Dammam, Saudi Arabia (780 km² (301 sq mi)). As an archipelago of thirty-three islands, Bahrain does not share a land boundary with another country but does have a 161 km (100 mi) coastline and claims a further 22 km (12 nmi) of territorial sea and a 24 km (13 nmi) contiguous zone. Bahrain's largest islands are Bahrain Island, Muharraq Island, Umm an Nasan, and Sitrah Desert constitutes 92% of Bahrain, and periodic droughts and dust storms are the main natural hazards for Bahrainis. Environmental issues facing Bahrain include desertification resulting from the degradation of limited arable land, coastal degradation (damage to coastlines, coral reefs, and sea vegetation) resulting from oil spills and other discharges from large tankers, oil refineries, distribution stations, and illegal land reclamation at places such as Tubli Bay.

Climate

Bahrain is an Island located in west to the mainland of Saudi Arabia. Jabal ad Dukhan is the highest point in Bahrain with hills up to 134 m (440 ft) above sea level. The Zagros hills in Iraq cause low level winds to be directed to the Bahrain Island. The dust bowls from Iraq and Saudi Arabia make fine dust particles easily transported by northwesterly winds which cause visibility reductions in the months of June and July. The summer is very hot since the Persian Gulf waters provide low levels of moisture supply. Seas around Bahrain are very shallow, heat up quickly in the summer, and produce high humidity, especially in the summer nights. In those periods, summer temperatures may reach about 35 °C (95 °F). Rainfall in Bahrain is minimal and irregular. Most rainfalls occur in the winter season, recorded maximum of 71.8 mm (7.2 cm).

Population

760,168. Nationals: 469,553 (61.8%) and non-Nationals: 290,615 (38.2%)

Currency: Bahraini Dinar

Living as an expat – Housing

Renting accommodation in Bahrain is a straightforward, well-established practice. Major international and local real estate agencies are available.

There's a wide range of apartments and villas available in Bahrain, both within and outside gated compounds.

Rental costs vary enormously for villas of different sizes, some with swimming pools, others without, and between old and new apartment blocks, in accordance with the desirability of the location.

Getting there and around

The easiest way to get around the Kingdom of Bahrain is by car. Vehicles can be hired from any number of car hire companies. Gasoline price in Bahrain is cheaper than in most other parts of the world. Travel by road within Bahrain is safe. Highways and major roads are four to six lanes wide and well maintained; however, roads in villages and older parts of Manama and Muharraq may be narrow and twisting. Driving in Bahrain is on the right hand side, in keeping with the majority of traffic world-wide.

Taxis are plentiful and can be hailed up from the street. It is compulsory for taxis to use tariff meters. Public transportation is provided by Cars Transport Corporation (commonly known as Cars). It offers around 40 air-conditioned buses that provide comfortable rides with services that run from 5 am to 12 midnight.

More information

For more information on Global Relocation Consultants (GRC) expat relocation services and mobility management please visit our website: www.grconsultants.org