

Countries A-Z: Bahrain

Check out this island country in the Middle East!



Alyaa Fakhroo grew up in Bahrain!

People of Bahrain used to dive into the ocean for treasure. They weren't swimming for gold though. Bahrainis searched for... shellfish? Workers grabbed oysters and popped them open for pearls. Read on to dive into Bahrain's history!

Where in the World

Bahrain is an island country in the Middle East. The nation has about 30 islands total! The islands sit between the countries of Qatar and Saudi Arabia. They are surrounded by the waters of the Persian Gulf. A series of bridges connects Saudi Arabia with Bahrain.

History

Many experts believe Bahrain is the site of an ancient kingdom called Dilmun. The land was used as a center for trading. The island was known for its pearls. Pearls were valuable for their beauty. Many people used them to make jewelry.

Portuguese rulers took control of Bahrain from 1521 to 1602. Persians then gained power from 1602 to 1783. Since then, the land has been ruled by the Khalifa family.

In the 1800s, Bahrain and Britain had a special relationship. Britain agreed to protect Bahrain from other nations. This all ended in 1968. That's when the British government withdrew its forces from the Persian Gulf. Bahrain claimed independence in 1971. And the nation signed a treaty of friendship with the United Kingdom!

The People and Culture

About 1.7 million people live in Bahrain. The official language of the nation is Arabic. Most people in Bahrain practice the religion of Islam.

Family is very important in Bahrain. The country's constitution states that "the family is the cornerstone of society."

Bahrain's most popular food is a dish called "machbous." This is a meat or fish dish served with rice. The Bahraini people are surrounded by water, so fish is very common in their diet.

Soccer (or "football") is Bahrain's most popular sport. In 2019, the nation won the Gulf Cup for the first time, against Saudi Arabia's national team!

Meet a local

Name: Alyaa Fakhroo

Age: 27

Birthplace: Awali, Bahrain

What does it mean to you to be from Bahrain?

To me, being from Bahrain means coming from a melting pot of cultures, with each one celebrated.

What is your favorite place in Bahrain and why?

My favorite place in Bahrain is the Bahrain Fort. That's an archaeological site by the sea and near the city. It clearly shows the contrast between old and new and the influence of different cultures on our nation.

What is something you wish children knew about Bahrain?

I wish that children around the world knew that "Bahrain" comes from the Arabic word for "two seas" due to its sweet water springs and being surrounded by the sea.

Flag

Bahrain's flag is white and red. There is a zigzag line of five white triangles that separate the colors. The five triangles may represent the five pillars of Islam. These beliefs include profession of faith, prayer, alms, fasting, and pilgrimage. They are the basic guidelines of Islam.

The color white represents peace with Britain. Red represents the Kharijite sect of the Islamic religion. This means that this color on the flag represents a subgroup of Islam.

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By Teresa Johnson