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**INTRODUCTION**

Marhaba! Welcome!

Volunteers from Saar Fellowship, specifically to help newcomers take their first steps in Bahrain, have compiled this booklet. Life will not be the same as where you came from but after a short time we hope you will begin to feel more at home.

The most important thing is to get out and meet people! Moving to a new country can be an exciting but daunting experience and it is not always easy to know where to start. We suggest that you buy a big map of Bahrain and, if you have driven elsewhere, start driving as soon as possible as this opens up the whole island to you.

Accept any invitation to an activity or event, including volunteering. You may enjoy yourself and better still, you may meet some new people who turn out to become good friends and we all need some of those!

Have fun on this new adventure!

# This booklet is for internal distribution only

# April 2014 EditionHISTORY OF BAHRAIN

Bahrain is a collection of islands with a total area of approximately 700 sq. km, with under a million inhabitants. It has limited natural resources and considerably wealthier neighbours. Full independence from Britain came in 1971, but Bahrain is NOT a new country! It was first known as Dilmun, long before the Americas were discovered and when the British Isles were still mystery shrouded lands. During subsequent periods of history, the islands were known as Tylos, Awal and finally Bahrain – now you know where all those odd names on shops come from! Bahrain is built upon the foundations of many earlier civilisations and cultures. Bahrain is a constitutional monarchy ruled by a king.

Bahrain is situated half way down the Arabian Gulf, 25km across the King Fahd Causeway from Saudi Arabia and slightly further from the Qatar Peninsula. Several causeways and bridges now link Manama with the neighbouring Island of Muharraq. You will find any maps of Bahrain soon go out of date as there is constant reclaiming of land.

South of the main island of Bahrain, near the coast of Qatar, are 16 islands of the Hawar group, the largest of which is 40 square kilometres in area (Hawar is one of many words for camel in Arabic). Hawar is similar in shape to Bahrain and makes for a nice outing. An easy boat ride will give you the feel of another world where some of the world’s largest colonies of cormorants have their habitat. There is a newly renovated hotel where you can spend time away from the busy life of Bahrain, and if lucky, also see rare dugongs.

Bahrain used to be largely free of crime, but sadly is now catching up with the rest of the world. Bahrainis are generally very friendly and helpful. Road rage is becoming a problem here, and break ins are becoming more common.

For car enthusiasts, the Bahrain International Circuit will be of interest. Shopping is on a par with most western cities and almost everything is available at a price. Local fish and fruit in season are good value. Public transport is minimal, but there are several taxi companies and by law, taxis must use their meters. Eating out is almost a hobby with a superb variety of choice and price – don’t be afraid to eat in local establishments as well as the international hotels.

Bahrain is a great place for young children. Expatriate schools are good but can be expensive and often have waiting lists. There are clubs catering for most tastes and more than 70 different Christian congregations are free to worship here.

**Ahlan wa sahlan bikun fil Bahrain – Welcome to Bahrain**

**DISCLAIMER & ERRORS**

Bahrain is a highly fluid society and things change quickly. Every possible care has been made to ensure the information contained in this booklet is accurate, but no responsibility is taken. The views recorded reflect the opinions and recommendations of the people who completed the survey and are naturally subjective. They do not constitute any formal endorsement of companies, products or services offered in Bahrain.

If something has changed or is incorrect please send an email to office@saarfellowship.com

**HOW TO USE THIS BOOK**

Each section gives business names, location and phone numbers or websites, plus the number of survey respondents who recommended the business. For example:

**Lingo Ease***(name of business)* Budaiya Highway behind Celebrations*(location)*

[www.lingoeasy.com](http://www.lingoeasy.com)*(web address)* 17590895 *(phone number)*

English, Arabic, French and Spanish classes, plus private tuition available*(description)*

**TOP TIPS**

* Remember Bahrain is a Muslim country, so be respectful of customs and religious practices, especially during Ramadan. Consider learning Arabic.
* Dress appropriately i.e. no short skirts and shorts in public places, no low tops, bare midriffs etc. Modesty is highly recommended, especially for ladies and female teenagers.
* Remember it is a privilege for expatriates to live here and not a right!
* Accept all invitations initially as it will help you establish some friendships. We suggest focusing more on building relationships than on setting up house.
* Start driving straight away. Don’t worry about getting lost; you’re on an island and main roads are usually fairly straightforward.
* Sort out a mobile phone so you are always contactable. The camera could be useful in case of a traffic accident dispute.
* Enter important numbers (such as traffic police and “in case of emergency” numbers), your home address, including block number and other location details, into your mobile phone.
* Always carry BD20 with you, so you can pay the on the spot “fine” if you have a traffic accident.
* Keep a photocopy of your CPR and driving license in your car.
* Subscribe to local publications to get to know local events and happenings.
* Be patient, as many things take longer here.
* Wear your seatbelt and drive defensively.
* Take advantage of cultural events, as many are free.
* Take a guided tour of the island.

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

**General**

Police 999

Ambulance 999

Fire 999

Traffic & Accidents 199

Electricity and Water 17515555

Flight Information 17339339

Weather 17236236

**Hospitals**

American Mission 17253447

Awali 17753333

BDF 17766666

Bahrain Specialist 17812000

Ibn Al Nafees 17828282

International 17598222

Salmaniya 17288888

**Taxis**

Arabian Taxi 17461746

Airport 17260208

Government Avenue 17223496

Speedy Motors 17682999

Bahrain Limo 17266266

**Cinemas**

Dana 17558558

Cineco, Bahrain City Centre 17864666

**Embassies**

France 17298600

India 17712785

Italy 17252424

Japan 17716565

Kuwait 17534040

Pakistan 17244113

UAE 17748333

United Kingdom 17574100

USA 17242700

**Directory assistance**

Local numbers 181

or [www.181.bh](http://www.181.bh)

**GETTING STARTED**

## On arrival

## You and your family and friends can be met and escorted through passport control, customs through a ‘meet and assist’ service. This is especially good for first-time visitors and grandparents. Most travel agents can arrange this for you or you can arrange it by filling in a form at the following web address: [www.bahrainairport.com/bia/aldana.htm](http://www.bahrainairport.com/bia/aldana.htm).

## Getting legal

## Bahrain’s eGovernment portal, found at [www.bahrain.bh](http://www.bahrain.bh), is a good place to start, with progressively more services becoming available online. Very little can be achieved by telephone, so you should be prepared to spend a great deal of time going from place to place to sort everything out.

Sort out your legal paperwork through your company. You will need a residence visa and a ‘CPR card’ (Central Population Registration). When you get your CPR card, take a photocopy of it and keep it safe. You should carry your CPR card at all times as you will need it for many transactions. Retain all old documents such as expired passports, CPR cards etc. You will need them to apply for a Certificate of Good Conduct before you leave. Find out if you will need to renew your visa and the date this should be done. Make a note on a calendar so you do not forget. Most countries insist that there is at least six months validity left on an existing passport so make a note of it’s renewal date and don’t forget!

**Public holidays**

These vary every year and are subject to confirmation:

Alwaqfa Day

Eid Al Adha (usually three days)

Al Hijrah New Year 1428

Ashoora (usually 2 day holiday)

Prophet’s birthday

1 May Labour Day

Eid Al Fitr (usually three days)

16 & 17 December National Day

**Helpful websites**

[www.clickbahrain.com](http://www.clickbahrain.com)

[www.saarfellowship.com](http://www.saarfellowship.com)

[www.mumsinbahrain.net](http://www.mumsinbahrain.net)

[www.bahrainexplorer.com](http://www.bahrainexplorer.com)

[www.whatsupbahrain.net](http://www.whatsupbahrain.net)

[www.bahrainivent.com](http://www.bahrainivent.com)

[www.expatriates.com](http://www.expatriates.com)

[www.whatsappbahrain](http://www.whatsappbahrain)

**Languages**

The official language of Bahrain is Arabic but English is widely spoken and used for business communication. All traffic and road signs are printed in both Arabic and English.

If you wish to learn Arabic you will need to decide which version as there are several, the main two being spoken Arabic (the Bahrain version of the Gulf Arabic dialect) and classic Arabic. Spoken Arabic tends to use little grammar and is unstructured whereas classic Arabic involves grammar, which often makes it easier for people who speak several languages. Language classes are available from several centres. Private tutors are often difficult to find, try looking for advertisements on supermarket noticeboards or clubs.

**Language centres**

**Berlitz,** Saar and Adliya [www.berlitz.ae](http://www.berlitz.ae) 17827847

Classes in Arabic, English, Japanese and other languages offered.

**LingoEase,** Budaiya Highway behind Celebrations, [www.lingoeasy.com](http://www.lingoeasy.com) 17590895

English, Arabic, French and Spanish classes, plus private tuition available.

**Time**

Bahrain is GMT plus two/three hours (two hours ahead in summer/three hours ahead in winter of the UK)

**Working hours**

Working hours vary considerably but as an indication:

* Government offices are open five days a week from 7am to 2pm Sunday to Thursday inclusive. They are closed on Friday and Saturday.
* Private companies normally operate from 8am – 5pm Sunday to Thursday. They are closed on Friday and often Saturday as well.
* Souks are normally open six days a week from 9am – 12pm and then from 4pm – 8pm. Very few shops in the Souk are open on Friday mornings.
* Supermarkets are open seven days a week from 8am – 10pm or even later on Fridays and Saturdays.
* Banks usually open for 5 days a week Sunday to Thursday inclusive. Check with each branch to ascertain exact hours.

**Climate**

Winter (December to March) often has night temperatures of between 10-15ºc and daily temperatures range between 8-29ºc. Summer, June to September, is mostly very hot with daily temperatures over 35ºc and the minimum temperature rarely below 25ºc. Humidity is normally very high during this season making it often feel hotter than it actually is. Rainfall normally occurs during the winter months but is rather limited with an average of 70mm per year only. However when it rains, it really rains and flooding often occurs!

## Driving license

## International driving licenses are permitted in Bahrain for a temporary period only so we advise obtaining a Bahrain driving license as soon as possible. For some nationalities this is automatically granted after taking an eye test, showing a copy of your international licence, your normal driving license from your home country, your passport and copy of your residency visa and paying a fee. Licenses can be obtained at the Traffic Directorate in Isa Town (at the building furthest away from the entrance gate).

## Housing

## If your company does not provide accommodation, check the Gulf Daily News for available housing and real estate agents. Check what flexibility you have on the lease if you change your mind and try to negotiate on price. We suggest you get the ‘Diplomatic Clause’ included in your lease. This clause allows you to leave the country without you being liable for the rest of the lease. Also include a clause, which allows you to give one month’s notice after the first year of the lease, even if the lease is valid for longer. We also suggest inserting a clause, which allows you to break the lease and move should you change sponsors/employers.

**Estate agents**

The agent’s commission is usually the equivalent of one month’s rental and the landlord not by the renter pays this.

**Al Hanaa Real Estate** 17250102 Gill 39839727

**Impact Estate** 17535111

**Remax** 17813666 Orla 39804509

**Communicating**

## Local telephone calls are cheap and prepaid options are readily available in shops and supermarkets. Post paid is usually even cheaper but you may have to pay a deposit up front and pay a monthly fee on top of the call costs. If your phone is stolen you can prevent the thief from using your phone by calling your service provider and giving the serial number of your phone. To get this number press: \*#06# then record this number somewhere safe. Store the numbers 199 for traffic accidents, 999 or 112 for general emergencies; fire, ambulance and police. Store an emergency contact number under ICE1, ICE2 etc. ICE stands for In Case of Emergency.

### Sending & receiving letters and parcels

Stamps can be purchased and letters weighed at Post Offices. Every mail items should carry the correct postage plus a charity stamp. For important documents, use registered mail; your letter will be traced through its journey and will need to be signed for by the recipient. Letters and small parcels are usually delivered to a post office box. You can rent a box at your chosen post office for an inexpensive annual fee. Parcels can be sent and received through the postal service. Alternatively, international courier services such as FedEx and DHL have offices here and will deliver to your home address. Some courier companies offer customers a US mailing address for online shopping orders, with the shipments then being forwarded to the customer in Bahrain.

**Taking out a loan**

We **strongly** urge you to be very careful if you decide to **borrow money** for **anything** here in Bahrain. Any loans will need to be undersigned by your employer and the employer is then legally bound to notify the financial institution should they terminate your employment or you choose to leave. This usually results in your bank account being frozen until all loans are immediately and fully repaid. Even if you have the money in a current or savings account you would need to find funds from elsewhere to settle the loan before they unfreeze your bank account. If you are unable to settle any outstanding amounts then a travel ban is usually implemented and this means the person who took out the loan is not allowed, under **any** circumstances to leave the country. It used to also mean that you couldn’t find new employment so it is a vicious, vicious circle. Please, please be very careful, as the law in Bahrain is definitely not on the side of any expats.

**TRANSPORT**

**Buying a car**

Cars, new or second hand can be bought through dealers or adverts on supermarket notice boards, club boards and in the newspaper. Cars can be hired for any period from a day to many years. Some people rent or lease rather than buy a car. When insuring, consider whether you might want to take your car into any other Gulf state, as some policies do not allow this even at extra cost.

Bahrain is a hot and dusty place that takes its toll on cars. Generally, cars don’t last as long here as they do in other countries – about ten years at the most. When buying a car consider the age of the car and how long you plan to stay. Resale values for used cars can be low as when people know that you are leaving they have the upper hand in negotiation.

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### Car registration

Your car will need re-registering every year and will need to be inspected annually after it is four years old. First you will need to get your car insurance renewed for 12 months. Once this is done you will need to take proof to the Isa Town offices of the Directorate of Traffic and get an inspection done. Then you take the paperwork they give you, complete the standard details and take to any Post Office. They will charge approx. BD20 and mail the form, plus the original documentation of your renewed insurance, to the Government registrar who will send you back your insurance documentation and new registration card in about four weeks. It is legal to drive while the renewal is in process but keep the receipt in the car as proof. Most cars use ‘Mumtaz’ petrol. The petrol attendants will fill up your car and do not expect a tip. Petrol is subsidised and is the same price everywhere.

### Safe driving

Each country has a different driving culture and Bahrain may take some getting used to. People can be very polite and sometimes give you right of way when you don’t have it, especially if you are a woman. This is very nice but a bit confusing.

The best tip we can pass on is to start driving immediately, as people who don’t drive here can feel very isolated. Try driving when you have an empty car with fewer distractions but full tank of petrol. Fridays and mid-morning seem to be the quietest times. Armed with a map we suggest you drive, drive, and drive. Bahrain is an island so you really cannot get lost!

In heavy traffic, keep your distance. If the car behind hits you and bumps you into the car in front, experience has shown that you will be held responsible for damage to the car in front of you. Be careful on roundabouts. There is no hard and fast rule about which lane to take for which exit. Other drivers may exit or change lanes at any time from any lane without indicating. We encourage you to use your indicators, but be aware that others will not. At traffic lights a flashing indicator often means the driver is doing a U-turn rather than turning across the traffic. The maximum speed on the freeways is 100km/h but some people go much faster. Even if you are doing 100km/h in the fast lane you will find people zooming up behind you with lights flashing. It is wise to get out of their way rather than have them swerve around you. Be careful at traffic lights as some drivers go across at red. If you need to brake check in your rear view mirror that the car behind you will stop too! Do not take it for granted.

It is illegal to drive with ANY alcohol in your system and the slightest trace of alcohol will result in you being found guilty, fined and possibly jailed and/or deported.

**Navigating**

Buy a big map and sort out a means of getting around. Map sites such as [www.maps.google.com](http://www.maps.google.com) and [www.wikimapia.com](http://www.wikimapia.com) can be useful, and [www.bahrainexplorer.com](http://www.bahrainexplorer.com) can give “point A to point B” directions. Many people, when giving directions, will refer to major roundabouts as a point of reference i.e. Burgerland roundabout, Pearl roundabout, etc. The quicker you are able to identify these landmarks the easier it will be to find your way around the island.

### Accidents

If you are involved in an accident telephone 199. For minor accidents you will be directed to the nearest of five traffic department offices located on Exhibition Road, Seef area, Muharraq post office, Isa Town and Riffa to file a report. Always get a copy of the police report, as this has to be presented to the insurance company. All parties have to pay a fine on the spot (BD6 if you are not guilty and BD16 if you are).

However, you need to be wary as you might end up being blamed for an accident, which wasn’t your fault, and once the car has been moved you have less proof. You may want to have a disposable camera in your car to record what actually happened, or use your mobile phone camera, as memories may become confused after the cars have been moved. Never move the vehicle if someone has been hurt. Even if it is blocking traffic just leave it where it stopped. Call the traffic police on 199 and wait for them to arrive. It can take up to two hours, especially in the middle of the day.

It is always wise to drive with:

* Mobile phone
* Spare money (BD20) in case of accident
* Your driving licence or CPR. You can be asked to produce your licence by any police officer at any time. Occasionally roadblocks are set up and every car checked to catch unlicensed drivers. I keep copies of all drivers in each car so that we can swap cars easily.

**Vehicle Care**

**Bahrain Auto Services** Khamis/Tashan 17400568

Moderate cost and good service Sales and maintenance offered

**Flash Car Services** Budaiya - car wash available 17690301

**Honda dealership** Sitra – National Motors, opposite Sitra Mall 17457100

**Kwik Car Care** Various locations 17466102

**Mazda dealership** Isa Town 17875777

**Nahrawan Car Services** Budaiya Highway, Jidhafs, opp. International Hospital 17590148

**Speedy Motors** Isa Town, near shopping centre 17682999

Good mechanics at reasonable prices, car wash; professional towing service

**Taxis**

There are three reliable metered taxi services, Speedy Motors (17682999), Arabian Taxi (17461746) and Bahrain Limo (17266266). By law taxis in the street are required to have meters, but often they are mysteriously ‘broken.’ Ask to see the meter switched on before you start your journey. Only pay the registered fare after you have arrived. If an argument seems to be developing, don’t pay until you, your children and all your belongings are out of the car.

### Buses

There are good clean buses covering the island, run by CARS Transport Corporation, the A.A. Bin Hindi Group (17878787). If a group of you is going out for the evening, it is possible to hire a bus and driver who will wait for you and take you home when required (try Capital Transport, 17701116).

## PERSONAL SAFETY

Bahrain is a safe country by world standards. Bahrainis are honest people and the strong community spirit limits antisocial behaviour. Violent crime or property invasions are unusual. Car theft is unusual but it is still wise to lock your car. Sadly, there are always a few troublemakers. Purse snatching is becoming increasingly common in large shopping centres. Thieves particularly target busy mums with small children. Never put your purse/wallet in the shopping trolley or the push chair/stroller– always keep it with you. Be careful when loading your shopping and children back into the car – do not leave your purse on the front seat while you are busy at the back. If you like to jog or bike ride, avoid going through smaller villages. Many are quite conservative and may not be used to the sight of foreign people, especially women, in exercise clothes. It is better to exercise at one of the gyms rather than on the street.

**First aid**

First aid courses are available, including courses specially tailored to the needs of domestic staff and those for who English is a second language. Contact First Aid Box Bahrain on 17792811 or 36732223 or see email [firstaid@batelco.com.bh](mailto:firstaid@batelco.com.bh)

# HOME AND LIVING

## Internet

Some apartments and villas include broadband and satellite television so we suggest you check first. There are three major telephone companies Batelco, Zain and Viva, plus several internet cafes. Skype links computer to computer free of charge enabling you to chat away for as long as you like without the worry of a huge telephone bill (the only cost is your internet time). You can also use Skype to call landlines in other countries from your computer and the rate is far cheaper than local providers. Download Skype online.

**Help in the home**

Many people in Bahrain have domestic help and/or a gardener and this is a real bonus. If you can offer accommodation, you may want to sponsor someone yourself. There are rules governing this and you need to take advice from the Ministry of Labour. See their website at <http://www.lmra.bh/en/portal.php>Although many expats have part-time help in the home (paid by the hour) this is legally a grey area. Houseboys/housemaids often operate on a ‘free visa’ system. This means that they have paid their sponsor an exorbitant amount of money for their residency visa and the sponsor has agreed that they are free to work for other people. This is illegal but many people operate like this. Ask any employee for a copy of their CPR. They may not have their passport as some sponsors hold this as a form of security.

### Preliminary questions

Decide beforehand what you need:

* Hours of work and time off including public holidays
* Babysitting and household duties
* Previous experience especially with children and pets (if applicable)
* Salary (we recommend you start at a lower rate and increase it after 3 months. This should motivate your helper).
* Communication – is it necessary that he/she can read and write English?
* Accommodation – room, electricity, gas, etc.

### Terms and conditions

Rates of pay vary enormously depending on the employer’s nationality and whether they are responsible for sponsoring the worker. Typically a gardener working half an hour a day, five days a week, gets BD10 per month. For casual labour the going rate is BD1.500 to BD2 per hour. It is always a good idea to ask around to check the current rates of pay. When you pay them, we suggest you keep a record and get them to sign a receipt. Be generous as these people are often the only source of income for their families back home and they send the majority of their salary back to their dependants.

### Finding the right person

You will often have many people ringing your doorbell once you have moved into new accommodation. We advise you to take your time to make sure you find the person who is right for you. Ask your neighbours who they have working for them. You are strongly advised to only employ someone who is recommended to you.

### Interviewing

Set all interviews for one particular day and ask prospective employees to come at a set time (take their name and contact number). This will help you judge whether they are going to be reliable. Always ask for a reference. Set out the terms and conditions before employing anyone and establish rules about visitors.

Communicating can be difficult at first so interview the person alone where he/she has to answer the questions themselves. Allow for the fact she/he may be nervous or shy but don’t rely on their English. Be especially careful if you have children to be cared for. Most housemaids/houseboys cannot swim so it is sensible to make a rule that your children are not allowed to swim in your absence.

### Working together

It will take time for you to learn to work together. People are often working in their second or third language and come from a different culture, so be patient. Every home is different; so don’t take it for granted that people know exactly how you want things done in your house. If they can read and write, we recommend making a daily list of duties for them to refer to.

Unless you are sponsoring your worker, we suggest you don’t give a house key straight away, until they’ve had a chance to prove themselves trustworthy. In addition, it is a good idea to employ them on one months’ trial. If the person is to live in, try to have them work one week’s trial before allowing them to move in. Once a person is living with you it is more difficult (emotionally) to terminate their employment.

Having home help here is an absolute bonus. Always treat your employees with respect and dignity.

**Appliances**

If you have purchased your appliance in Bahrain, the warranty may only be valid locally and in the GCC states. Some major manufacturers have fully trained staff to repair their products while others only claim to. Be careful if buying appliances and computer equipment that the voltage is the same, as you need.

## Water

Unless you have a fresh water supply to your home, you will need to purchase water. Your property may come complete with a water cooler but if not, one can be bought. Water supplies can be delivered weekly – try Al Manhal 17404435 or Aqua Cool 17784101. A water truck visits some compounds, which refill bottles much more cheaply – ask your neighbours about this.

## Bottled gas

Several companies deliver bottled gas. Expect to pay a deposit on your gas bottle and make sure you get a receipt otherwise you will not be able to get a refund when you leave. Bahrain Gas (17531111) and Nader Gas (17702622) will deliver directly to your home.

## Equipping your home

If you are looking for second hand items, these can be found advertised on the notice boards at most of the supermarkets, the British Club and the Dilmun Club or sometimes in charity shops e.g. Awali Ladies, BSPCA, St Christopher’s Cathedral. The small ads at the back of the Gulf Daily News also have notices on occasions. Bahrain Auctions, Manama Auctions are second hand shops – not auction houses – so be prepared to haggle!

## Recycling

There are recycling bins located in most neighbourhoods, often close to supermarkets and schools. Sturdy multi-use bags are available for purchase at major shopping centres.

**Hardware Stores**

**Akbari** Near Al Hawaj, Salmaniya 17728173

**Anwar General Trading Tubli** 17874141

Good for cheap household items

**Manazel** Isa Town, parallel to main road 17786727

Hardware supplies such as paint, tools, picture hangers, seasonal decorations, home

decorating supplies, pool toys, gardening items, car items, basic key cutting service

# MONEY MATTERS

## Currency

The currency in Bahrain is the Bahrain Dinar (BD) where one Bahraini Dinar is divided into 1,000 fils. The Bahraini Dinar is pegged to the US Dollar at a rate of BD1 = US$2.65. Other exchange rates are given daily in the local newspaper (GDN).

## Banking

You usually need your CPR and other official documents such as your passport and residency visa before you can open a bank account. Money can be transferred electronically, through banks and money exchanges. Automatic telling machines are well located. Credit cards are widely accepted.

### Utilities

Electricity is heavily subsidised by the government. Electricity and water bills for a three bedroom villa can range from BD5 during winter to BD100 in summer. A ‘municipal tax’ worth 10% of your rent is added to your electricity bill. Contact Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) for connections. Their website is [www.mew.gov.bh](http://www.mew.gov.bh)

**SHOPPING**

### Food

Food costs vary according to your tastes and lifestyle. A wide range of imported products is available. The Gulf Weekly News regularly publishes a comparison of the major supermarkets in its sample shopping basket column.

There is a range of supermarkets offering different products; some stock the home brands of popular British or US supermarkets. Al Jazira is also known as AJ’s; Alosra is also known as Spinney’s. Bargains may be found at hypermarkets such as Lulu, Geant and Carrefour. The central market near the Pearl Roundabout in Manama has a huge fruit and vegetable area and a fish market. As with all markets, do your homework so you know the usual retail price and be prepared to haggle. If you don’t have time to go to the market yourself, check out the Bahraini-run roadside stalls selling fruit and vegetables. Visit them early in the day for the freshest produce. Some food supplies can be erratic as they are dependent on the arrival of shipping containers. Think about buying extras when you see non-perishable items you like. Food labelling is not bound by the same regulations as you may be used to, so be careful.

**General Goods**

As in most countries, there are bargains to be had in Bahrain; while other goods are much more expensive than where you have come from. Brand-name beds can be much cheaper than elsewhere but be aware that sizes of beds and bedding vary. Plastic products are cheap – local markets can be even cheaper than supermarkets.

Upholstery &furnishings are a real bargain and the workmanship is good. Many people buy curtain material here and have curtains sewn to take back to their base country. Suites and chairs can be recovered.

Pharmacies here sell items which might only be available on prescription elsewhere. Some drugs/medications are cheaper here. Warranty and return policies vary widely and you should check at the time of purchase.

**Tipping**

This varies according to our own cultures. Many people here are on a low income and appreciate a “top up” tip for extra services you want them to perform.

**Books**

**The Bookcase** Budaiya Highway, near Alosra 17690566

Excellent selection of educational books also gifts, stationery, etc.

**Ethnic arts/crafts and carpets**

**A’Ali village potteries**

See potters at work and buy unique souvenirs from these small businesses

**Adliya shops**

Lots of carpets and crafts Explore Adliya on foot

**Al Jasra Handcraft Centre** Al Jasra village 17611900

Basket weaving, instrument making and handicraft demonstrations

**Woodland Crafts** Dana Mall; Manama Souk; Juffair 17827075

Wide variety of crafts and souvenirs be prepared to barter

**Manama Souk** Manama, behind Bab Al Bahrain

You can find all sorts of local craft items here as well as electronics, kitchen appliances

sheets, baskets, fabric, furniture, toys, and gold, lots of gold. A good rule is to price items

at a hypermarket first to make sure you can bargain for a fair price.

**Muharraq Souk** Muharraq

This is one of the least changed areas and a good place to take visitors. In the back streets you can see

much of the old style architecture. On the main street you can visit fabric shops, sweet shops, etc.

**Peacock Carpet Centre** “Shawarma Alley”, Adliya 17713152

**Red Sea Hand Made Carpets** Adliya 17717785

**Photography**

**Fair Photos** Bahrain Mall 17550940

Developing, printing and reproduction services, passport photos

**Scope Photo and Artistic Production** Budaiya Highway, Budaiya 17699520

**Picture framers**

**Arabesque Art Gallery** Umm Al Hassam 17722916

Good paintings available by popular local artist. Excellent picture framers,

known for its selection of Bahraini art and antique maps

**Bashar Art Gallery** Adliya 17727326

**Sheema Framing** Adliya 17713235

Reasonable prices, quality workmanship and can pay in BD or US$

**Toys**

**Carousel** Isa Town 17685012

Fantastic selection of Arabic and European toys which holds dance andcraft classes

for children in the afternoons

**Early Learning Centre** Bahrain City Centre; Seef Mall 17179739

**Mothercare UK** Bahrain City Centre; Seef Mall; Bahrain Mall 17179738

Also have baby and toddler furniture and accessories

**Toys Я Us** Outside Seef Mall 17580860

Has good range of toys and games and stocks major brands

**The Toy Store** Bahrain City Centre 17179232

Middle East chain noted for its huge stuffed animals

**Tailoring**

Try a tailor as they are cheap and are excellent at copying

**Hilton Tailors** Manama Souk 17245689

Very professional and great attention to detail

**Miscellaneous shops and services**

**Alosra,** Najibi Centre, Budaiya Highway/Saar Avenue roundabout 17697558

This supermarket is popular with western expats. It sells pork products and is a convenient

place to buy stamps. The centre also has an optometrist, hair salons, and DVD outlets, key

cutting service, dry cleaner, insurance/banking and a McDonalds

**Ambassador Stores** Government Rd, Manama, close to Bab al Bahrain. 17225513

Musical instruments and sound equipment

**Bahrain City Centre Mall**

Major shopping mall with Carrefour hypermarket, Debenhams, Virgin Megastore,

Home Centre, etc. Many international brand stores and youth oriented fashion outlets.

Also has Wahoo Water Park, bowling alley, amusement park, cinemas and restaurants

**Bahrain Mall**

Shopping mall with easy parking including Geant hypermarket, Home Store etc

**BSPCA Thrift Shop** Busheiri Gardens, Budaiya Highway, opp. Wholesale Restaurant 17593479

The main source of income for the Bahrain Society for the Prevention Of Cruelty to Animals.

Sells clothing, books and household goods. Volunteers are always needed

**Celebrations** Budaiya Highway, Budaiya 17595791

Scrapbooking, wood painting, card making classes and supplies; gifts and birthday parties. Has

nice adjoining café (A Piece of Cake) with English-style baked potatoes, cakes, and sausage rolls

**Jassim’s Agricultural** Budaiya Highway Budaiya 17599000

Garden supplies and plants. Has a good range of indoor plants and pots

**Jawad Dome** Off Budaiya Highway

Small shopping centre with shaded car parking. Supermarket and other UK stores

Pleasant food court and upmarket home decoration store called Article

**Sage and Sirloin** Hamala, near British School 17611949

Australian butcher with high-quality meat, “Aussie” meat pies and pork section

**Seef Mall** Seef

Upmarket mall with fashion and jewellery, lots of restaurants and eateries, two cinemas

complexes, Marks and Spencer etc

**The One** Al Ali Mall, Seef 17587178

Stylish home furniture and décor like an “upmarket Ikea” with helpful staff

**PETS**

Bahrain is regarded as a rabies free island and therefore strict regulations are in force regarding the import and export of pets. Be aware that the process of exporting an animal from Bahrain to a rabies free country may take at least six months. All the vets have the necessary information and some can arrange to export your pet when you leave. All animals will need to be micro chipped, given a pet passport and vaccinated against Rabies. Current inoculations are essential too.

**Veterinary and pet services**

**Al Ahli Animal Clinic** 17622102

Dr Jaffer is recommended

**Bahrain Government Vet** Budaiya, next to Post Office

Good for vaccinations and so much cheaper that other vets. For

hygiene reasons make sure the syringes are drawn in front of you

**Animal Care Clinic** Near Midway Supermarket, Pipe line Road, Hamala 17612459

Reasonable service and prices

**Dr Nonie Coutts** Manama & Saar 17245515

Friendly, professional service but rather expensive. Immunisations, surgery, pet

grooming, general medical care, total pet relocation management

**Dog grooming** Jane Jones, Saar 37780699

Jane is a UK trained dog groomer and loves dogs big and small! She

is willing to collect and return dogs as necessary

**Kennels**

**Delmon Kennels,** Bar Bar 17694966

Dog boarding and training

**Saar Kennels** Saar 17792064

Cat and dog boarding. Dogs are taken out of their kennels several times daily to run

in a play area. Cats have a nice set-up as well

**Buying/obtaining pets**

**BSPCA** [www.bspca.org](http://www.bspca.org)

Animal welfare organisation runs almost entirely by volunteers. They always need helpers and dog walkers

**Fish World** Budaiya Highway 17593733

Aquariums, fish stocks and supplies

**MEDICAL MATTERS**

There are many private hospitals operating in Bahrain. Many have 24 hour facilities although expect to pay a lot more for out of hours service. There are private and government services available here. Most employers provide medical cover – check with your company. Anyone with a valid CPR card is entitled to attend a local clinic or hospital. In some hospitals, doctors are paid for the work they bring in, not by a salary. This has resulted in doctors pressuring patients to be admitted unnecessarily. Remember you can always get a second opinion. Check with your insurer for the level of refunds they will pay for treatment at different hospitals as these vary.

Ambulance response times can be slow. If safe to move the injured person it may be better to transport the patient to the nearest clinic or hospital where they can be stabilised. We STRONGLY advise against stopping and giving medical help at a road accident unless you are a qualified medical person.

**Dentist/Orthodontist**

**Al Mosawi Dental Clinic** Adliya 17717199

**AMH Manama Clinic** Manama 17253447

**Awali Hospital Dental Clinic** Awali 17753588

Efficient clinic with dental hygienist

**Bahrain Specialist Hospital** Juffair 17812000

**Dr Ali Mattar Dental Centre** Manama 17714877

**Dr Hammad Hassam bin Shams** Adliya 17828205

**Dr Zahra Majid,** Saar Dental17596444

Dr Zahra is very kind especially patient with children and adults and we all love her!

**Saar Clinic (AMH)** Saar Avenue 17790025

**Seef Dental** Seef 17587991

**Hospitals/Clinics**

**American Mission Hospital** Manama 17253447

Be prepared to wait, even if you have an appointment

**Awali Hospital** Awali 17753333

Small, well-run hospital with friendly and helpful staff with personal attention and good

maternity section

**Bahrain Defence Force Hospital** West Riffa 17766666

Good for Accident and Emergency. You need a valid CPR card

**Bahrain Specialist Hospital** Juffair 17812000

This hospital is known for its exorbitant prices and treating patients unfairly. Many medical

schemes will not reimburse you 100%

**International Hospital of Bahrain** Off Budaiya Highway 17591666

Expensive hospital. Check costs on arrival otherwise you might be in for a nasty surprise.

Many medical schemes will not reimburse you 100% for attending this hospital

**Saar Clinic, American Mission Hospital,** Saar Avenue 17790025

**Salmaniya Medical Complex** Salmaniya

Best equipped for A&E department. Make sure you have your valid CPR card

**Ophthalmology**

**American Mission Hospital,** Manama 17253447

**Bahrain Optician** Branches around Bahrain

Various qualities of glasses ranging from inexpensive to top-quality, in both lenses and frames

**Bahrain Specialist Hospital** Juffair 17812000

**Ibn Al Nafees Medical Complex** Adliya 17828282

**Yateem Optician** Branches around Bahrain - Alosra branch is recommended 17691244

**Rehabilitation**

**American Mission Hospital – Physiotherapy** Manama 17253447

**EDUCATION**

There are a lot of private schools in Bahrain offering different curricula. We suggest you find other people from your country and find out their opinion or ask your embassy.

**Bahrain School** Juffair – American curriculum 17727828

**British Preparatory School** Rahim Villas, Saar Avenue - British curriculum 17792010

**British School of Bahrain** Hamala 17613330/17610920

**Little Gems Pre School** Budaiya 17694356

**Ibn Khuldoon** Isa Town – American curriculum 17682451/17780661

**Madeleine’s Pre School** Adliya 17270290

**Riffa International School** Riffa Views – American curriculum 17757999

**St Christopher’s School** Saar – British curriculum 17598600

**Music Centres**

**Bahrain Ballet Centre** Budaiya 17693232

Ballet, tap, modern, Irish dancing, musical theatre, piano and karate for children and adults.

**Bahrain Music Institute** Manama 17721999

Daytime instrumental classes for both children and adults

# RELIGION

**Saar Fellowship** St. Christopher’s Infant School, Saar 17400246/39935354

Saar Fellowship is a friendly church with lots of different nationalities. Services held in English on Friday mornings at 10 am offering children’s classes, teens and crèche run at the same time as the service

Email: office@saarfellowship.com Website: www.saarfellowship.com

**Good News Church** Zinj 17261787

Pentecostal, very active, predominately Indian Church

**Holy Trinity Chapel** American Military Base, Juffair 17854507

Service held in English on Friday mornings

**National Evangelical Church** Behind American Mission Hospital, Manama 17254508

Parking can be difficult so get there early and find a side street to park in

**Rivers of Joy Church** Shukura near Saar 39271539

Small, friendly church with a service held in English on a Friday morning. Pastor Basie Lighthelm

**Sacred Heart Church** Manama 17253598

Many services held in different languages most days of the week. Parking can be difficult so

get there early and find a side street to park in

**St. Christopher’s Cathedral** Near Police Fort, Manama 17253866

Various services held through out the week at Manama and Awali. The facilities are used by

other Christian groups whose first language is not English

# KEEPING BUSY AND HAVING FUN

The easiest way to find out about activities is to ask someone with children of similar age. The local English paper, Gulf Daily News (GDN) has a section listing daily activities. This is a starting place; however, it might not be totally correct. Phone the organisers of the event to check details. Taking out a GDN subscription is an excellent way to quickly get to know what is happening. Contact them on 17290000 or [www.gulf-daily-news.com](http://www.gulf-daily-news.com)

SAFETY WARNING: Although staff may be on hand at various clubs and hotels they are unlikely to hold any suitable safety qualifications so you need to be responsible for your children’s safety especially regarding water-based activities.

**Social organisations**

There are many social organisations in Bahrain and particular nationalities often have their own social groups. Here are some suggestions:

Australian Association of Bahrain [www.australiabahrain.com](http://www.australiabahrain.com)

American Women’s Association [www.awabahrain.org](http://www.awabahrain.org)

Bahrain Caledonian Society [www.bahraincaleys.com](http://www.bahraincaleys.com)

Bahrain Garden Club [www.bahraingardenclub.com](http://www.bahraingardenclub.com)

Bahrain Irish Society [www.bahrainirishsociety.com](http://www.bahrainirishsociety.com)

Bahrain Kannada Sangha [www.kannadasangha.com.bh](http://www.kannadasangha.com.bh)

Bahrain Round Table <http://brt1.net>

Bahrain Welsh Society [www.taffia.org](http://www.taffia.org)

Filipino Club <http://filipinoclubbahrain.org>

Indian Ladies Association <http://ilabahrain.org>

Pakistan Club [www.pakistanclub.org](http://www.pakistanclub.org)

Royal Society of St George [www.royalsocietyofstgeorge.com/bahrain](http://www.royalsocietyofstgeorge.com/bahrain)

**Activities for pre-schoolers**

**Al Areen Wildlife Park** Al Areen 17836116

Air-conditioned bus tour of the park and an informative film included with entrance fee

**Camel Farm** Janabiyah

Private camel farm, but visitors are able to walk around the camel enclosures.

Stay on the paths. Late afternoon is best as the camels may spend the day elsewhere

**Local parks** Various neighbourhoods

Great places to meet local families

**Magic Planet** Bahrain City Centre 17584444

Indoor Fun Park

**Mainly Music** Saar 36797938

Musical activities and education for tots and their mums/grand-mothers/carers Contact Kate Webb

**Mum and tot** Various Groups

Playgroups are available at various locations, including the British Club in Adliya, the Bahrain

Rugby Football Club in Saar, the Dilmun Club in Saar (see listings under “Clubs” for contact details)

**My Gym** Seef 17566566

Learn, create and explore

**Studio Ceramics** Off Budaiya Highway near Harley Davidson 17599026

Workshops, birthday parties, pottery painting, crafts etc

**Beauty and hair**

**Ann’s Beauty Salon** Sanad, opposite HSBC 17623704

**Beauty Spot** Jasra, near Batelco 17611888

**Dessange** Adliya 17713999

**Elie and Jean** Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Seef; Regency Intercontinental, Manama 17580798/17227300

Gilbert at Ritz-Carlton salon is recommended for men’s; Regency salon is

recommended for women’s. Modern salons with top stylists and colourists, but expensive

**Ghaya** Budaiya Highway 17595135

Women’s hair and beauty

**Mazyanah Beauty Centre** East Riffa 17775525

**Novel Beauty** Two Saar locations: Saar Avenue and Miami Park 17791222

Good for waxing, threading, manicures and pedicures and competitively priced

**Pineapple Spa** Adliya 17712000

**Reflections** Alosra (Najibi) centre, Budaiya Highway

**Regency Salon** Manama 17227300

**Style 2 Beauty** Gufool 17252515

**Style 3 Beauty** Seef Residence, Seef 17582007

**Bikes**

**Euro Cycles** Budaiya Highway

**Skate Shack** Budaiya Highway near Alosra 17697176

**Toys Я Us** Seef Mall Car Park 17580860

**Clubs**

**Bahrain Rugby Club** Saar 17695809

Popular expat club offering bar, meals and a range of sporting and social activities including

swimming, cricket, football and (of course) rugby. Non-members welcome if signed in by a member

**Bahrain Yacht Club** Sitra 17700677

Water sports and social activities

**British Club** Um Al Hassam (Adliya) 17729245

British expat club with variety of activities including darts, tennis, squash and swimming

lessons, bar and meals available. Non-members welcome if signed in by a member

**Country Club** Budaiya 17593593

Established gardens with pleasant restaurant/bar and a variety of club activities and sports

**Dilmun Club** Saar 17692986

Social club popular with expats offering horse stables, tennis courts, squash courts, swimming pool,

children’s play area. Good pub food and restaurant offering reasonable prices. Fitness classes such as

pilates, football, diving, etc. Non-members welcome if signed in by a member. Also recommended

for outside catering

**EZ Fit Sportsplex** Off Budaiya Highway 17692378

Indoor fitness centre

**Ritz-Carlton Beach/Health club** Seef 1758000

Health club members and hotel guests can enjoy what is usually considered the best beach in

Bahrain

**Road Runners Club** Various venues 36992288

Fitness and social group

**Other activities/sports/hobbies**

**American Women’s Association**

(See listing under Social Organisations)

**Art classes** Mallen Gallery, Awali [www.awaliarts.moonfruit.com](http://www.awaliarts.moonfruit.com) Artist Seana Mallen runs a variety of classes for adult painters of all skill levels. Highly recommended

**Australasian Women’s Group**

(See listing under Social Organisations)

**Dancing and fitness** Victoria Dance, Saar 39876215/17590093

Offers various styles of dance lessons for children of all ages and adults, taught by qualified dance instructor

**Golf**

Awali Golf Club 17756770

Royal Golf Club Riffa 17750777

**Horse riding**

Dilmun Club, Saar 17693766

Shakhoora Riding Centre 17591103

Twin Palms

**Netball** Dilmun Club, Saar 17692986

**Rugby** Bahrain Rugby Club, Saar 17695809

Men, women and kids’ rugby lessons and games

**Sailing and water sports** Marina Club, Al Fateh Corniche, Manama 17291527

**Tennis** Dilmun Club, Saar 17692986

**Walking/biking** Try the path and park near Riffa Views International School

**Wednesday Ladies Lunch Club**

Informal expat ladies social group [scott.family.nz@gmail.com](mailto:scott.family.nz@gmail.com)

**Yachting**

Bahrain Yacht Club, Sitra 17799677

**Family fun**

**Adhari Park**

Sheikh Isa bin Salman Highway, Adhari 17407300

Theme park popular with locals

**Funland ice skating & bowling** Al Fateh Corniche, Manama 17292313

**Geo caching** Various locations [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com)

Fun family activity enabling you to get to know Bahrain better

**Gulf Dolphin Company** Al Fateh Corniche, Manama 17290900

Dolphin aquarium with dolphin shows several times daily. It is possible to swim with the

dolphins, but use your own judgement as there are no lifeguards and the pool is deep

**Lost Paradise of Dilmun Water Park** Al Areen 17845100

Kids love it but it is more expensive than Wahoo. Has “dive-in movies” over summer and regular ladies’ nights

**Magic Island kids’ play area** Seef Mall

More fun than shopping with mum!

**Movies** Bahrain City Centre, Seef Mall, Saar Cineplex and Dana Mall. See daily listings in the Gulf Daily News

**New Corniche park near Arad Fort** Muharraq Island

Take a picnic and go for a walk

**Picnic on Amwaj Beach** Amwaj Island

Beach created on reclaimed land

**Wahoo Water Park** Bahrain City Centre Mall 17173000

Slides and pools for children of all ages and adults, indoor and outside.

**Sight-seeing**

**A’ali Pottery workshops** (See listing under Ethnic arts/crafts)

**Al Areen Wildlife Park** (See listing under Activities for tots and pre schoolers)

**Al Dar and Jarada Islands** Accessible by sea taxi and island tours 17294429/17704600

[www.islandtours.bh](http://www.islandtours.bh)[www.aldarislands.com](http://www.aldarislands.com)

**Al Jasra Handicrafts Centre** Al Jasra Village 17611900

The centre, established in 1991, houses various craft industries, including weaving, pottery,

ship building, doll making, gypsum engravings, palm tree products and musical instrument making.

You can make purchases from the vendors or the gift shop

**Al Khamis Mosque ruins** Khamis/Tashan

The remnants of the original building are among the oldest relics of Islam in the Gulf region. According to

local legend, the establishment of this mosque **dates** back to 717- 720 AD

**Ancient Dilmun sites/burial grounds** Saar, Shakura, A’ali and others

There are 11 burial ground sites on the western part of the island, extending 25km. Most were built between the middle of the third millennium BC and the middle of the first millennium AD. A’ali is interesting because of its giant "Royal Mounds", which have become part of the village’s urban fabric

**Arad Fort** Muharraq 17672278

The current fort was built in the 13th Century, but Dilmun era remains dating back to 2300BC have been found on the site. It is best not to go on a windy day

**Bahrain International Circuit** Gulf of Bahrain Ave, Sakhir 17450000

This is the home of the Bahrain Grand Prix and has plenty of activities for motor enthusiasts.

Go carting available but booking advisable

**Bahrain National Museum** Al Fateh Corniche 17298777

Nine separate exhibition halls feature permanent and temporary exhibits about Bahrain’s heritage

and culture

**Beit Al Jasra (Al Jasra House)** Al Jasra village

This fine example of a traditional Bahraini courtyard house, built in 1907, was the birthplace of the late Amir, Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa. Furnished in the style of the period

**Beit Al Quran (House of the Quran)** Manama, opp. Diplomatic area 17290101

This is home to one of the most comprehensive collections of Holy Quranic manuscripts in the world.

The building’s exterior features engraved Quranic verses and a minaret based on the design of the

12th century minaret of Bahrain’s Al Khamis mosque. Dress appropriately – no shorts or sleeveless tops

**Camel Farm** (See listing under “Activities for tots and pre-schoolers”)

**Desert excursions/picnics/camping** (See listing under Other activities/sport/hobbies)

**Dolphin watching/island cruise** [www.islandtours.bh](http://www.islandtours.bh)

**Grand Mosque (Ahmed Al Fateh Mosque)** Juffair 17727773

Open 9am-4pm, closed during prayer times. No prior appointments needed unless a large

group or special arrangements are needed. The Grand Mosque, which can accommodate

up to 7000 worshippers, is the largest and most imposing of Bahrain’s Muslim worship

centres. No shorts or sleeveless tops. Women must wear an abaya, which can be borrowed there

**Hawar Islands** South of Bahrain [www.hawarresort.com](http://www.hawarresort.com) 17311770

**Iftar meal during Ramadan** Local – see “Eating out”.

Iftar signifies the breaking of the fast during the holy Islamic month of Ramadan. Iftar banquets are a feature of Bahrain social life during Ramadan

**Lost Paradise of Dilmun Water Park** (See listing under Family Fun) 17845100

**Manama Souk** Manama (See listing under Ethnic Arts/Crafts)

**Muharraq historic houses** Muharraq

Sheikh Isa bin Ali House, Seyadi House, Kurar embroidery house, coffeehouse, children’s library,

Sheikh Ebrahim bin Mohammed Al Khalifa Centre for Culture and Research, Abdulla Al Zayed

Press Heritage House and Mohammed bin Faris House for Sout Music are among the museums and

historic houses open to the public in what was once the capital of Bahrain. See functioning wind towers at Sheikh Isa’s house

**Qal’at Al Bahrain Fort and Museum** Karbabad

Open seven days, 8am-8pm. Admission to museum is minimal. World Heritage-listed since 2005,

this Islamic fort dates back to the 16th century AD on a site, which may have been the location

of the old capital of Delmon. Evidence has been found of habitation dating back 4000 to 5000 years.

Efforts have recently been made to transform the site into a major tourist attraction, with paved pathways, audio guides and a modern museum

**Riffa Fort** Riffa

Built on a strategic hilly position, the current fort was built in 1812 AD on the ruins of a 17th century fort

**Royal Golf Club** Riffa Views 17750777

Rounds can be booked for play from 7.30am to late afternoon. There is a beautiful clubhouse

with fine dining, bars, snack and pro shops. Club rules and etiquette apply

**Saudi Causeway tower/restaurant** King Fahad Causeway 17690674

There is a restaurant and observation tower near the mid-point of the Saudi Causeway. Be

warned though, that the causeway can often be very chaotic

**Tree of Life** Sakhir

This mature tree has become known as the Tree of Life because of the mystery surrounding its existence in the middle of the desert without any known water source. Go in the cooler months and take a picnic. Take plenty of water and a mobile phone. Be wary of youngsters riding around on quad bikes at high speeds

**Getting away**

Bahrain is strategically placed for short and longer trips around the area. When you feel “island fever” coming on, a short break can revitalise you.

**Travel agents**

**Bahrain International Travel** Chamber of Commerce building, Manama 17223315

**Dadabhai Travel**  17223181

**House of Travel** Manama 17578578

**Kanoo Travel** Manama

**Sunshine Travel and Tours** Manama 17223601

**World Travel** Bab al Bahrain, Manama 17225650

**Top picks for a weekend away**

**Dubai** Hint: Don’t speed in Dubai!

**Jordan**

**Muscat**

**Novotel Al Dana Resort, Bahrain** Muharraq Causeway, [www.novotel-bahrain.com](http://www.novotel-bahrain.com)

**Oman** Hint: Avoid the city and go for the cultural experiences

**EATING OUT**

Bahrain has a wealth of good eateries. Phone the restaurants for bookings and directions, as some can be hard to find. Restaurants and cafes are usually closed during the day in the holy month of Ramadan, even eateries in major shopping malls, only opening after iftar. Some restaurants will close completely for the whole month. Cafes in the airport departures area and inflight catering are usually not affected. Hotel coffee shops and restaurants are often open throughout the day too.

**American/Mexican**

**Casa Mexicana** Adliya 17715521

**Chilli’s** Seef; Juffair; Jawad Dome, Bahrain City Centre 17581221

Cheerful chain with family-friendly American and Tex-Mex foods

**Fuddruckers** Various locations 17742266

**Johnny Rocket’s** Seef 17566565

1950s-styled diner, complete with individual jukeboxes

**Ric’s Kountry Kitchen** Juffair

Popular restaurant with Americans

**Senor Paco’s** Seef Mall food court; Adliya 17725873

Mexican food

**Arabic/Lebanese/Turkish**

**Al Abraaj** Al Ali Mall, Muharraq, Budaiya, Hamala and other locations 17714222

Popular, low-cost chain of restaurants and take aways with excellent Middle Eastern food

and a variety of international dishes

**Anatolia** Budaiya Highway 17690601

Turkish food

**Adam Pastries** Busaiteen; Riffa; Arad; Hamad Town 17555595

**Isfahani** Exhibition Rd Manama; Bahrain City Centre 17290027

Unpretentious, but with a reputation for quality food

**Isis Café** Adliya 17826266

Local food

**Mohammed Noor** Exhibition Road, Manama 17296678

Local food, and you can sit on the floor!

**Saj Express** Seef; Juffair 17564477

Lebanese food

**Takht Jamsheed** Gulf Hotel, Adliya 17713000

**Yas-e-Isfahani** Seef 17581151

**Zayt Zaytoom** Budaiya Highway; Saudi Causeway; Hoora 17312222

**Asian**

**Banana Leaf** Adliya 17744171

Thai

**Bushido** Seef 17583555

Contemporary Japanese restaurant with Samurai warrior themed décor

**Central Café** Manama 17263271

Indian food

**Century International** Adliya 17710100

India

**Copper Chimney** Umm Al Hassam 17728699

Authentic Indian food with nice atmosphere

**Frangipani** Seef Mall 17582422

**Hash House** Adliya 17715094

Standard Thai food in cheerful surroundings

**Hong Kong** Adliya, off Umm Al Hassam Ave 17728700

Popular Chinese restaurant

**Kei** Golden Tulip Hotel, Manama 17535000

Authentic Japanese

**Lanterns** Budaiya Highway, next to Burgerland roundabout and Adliya 17590591

This offers great Indian and Anglo-Indian food with a nice atmosphere and excellent service.

Also offers a buffet on certain evenings

**Mirai** Adliya 17713113

Popular and trendy Japanese

**Monsoon** Adliya 17749222

This award-winning restaurant with lovely gardens and beautiful food presentation is licensed

**Nu Asia** Seef (outside Al Ali Mall) and soon on Budaiya Highway 17587171

Large, colour-coded menu offers Indian, Thai, Japanese and Chinese **f**ood. Can appear

closed because the front door is really heavy

**Rice Bowl** Seef Mall 17583113

**Tandoori Hut** Adliya 17713874

**Thailand Restaurant** Adliya 17717040

**Samarkand Palace** Budaiya Highway, next to Good Life Gallery 17697996

Cheap and cheerful Indian, Chinese, Arabic and Continental takeaways and buffet

**Wholesale Restaurant** Budaiya Highway 17595950

Good-value restaurant and take aways

**Cafés**

**Café Lilou** Adliya & Al Ali Mall 17714440

Wonderful café serving European food including quiche, croissants, soups, salads

**Camille’s** Diplomatic area; Exhibition Road Manama; Bahrain Financial Harbour 17533808

**Cappuccino Café** Saar Avenue, next to Hi-Mart 17790404

Open throughout the day with an extensive menu

**Coco’s** Adliya, in lane between Gulf Hotel and main street 17716512

Excellent fresh food and reasonably priced for teas, lunches or light suppers but you often

have to wait for a table

**The Dome** Juffair 17810180

Australian chain which offers a good selection of food and drinks

**Le Chocolate** Seef, diagonally opposite Seef Mall 17582259

Tasty breakfast and lunch menus, good for pizzas and great choice of desserts

**Veranda Gallery Café** Tubli; Adliya 17715868

Popular coffee shop, especially with locals

**European**

**Camelot** Adliya 17717745

Fresh, French food served in “chateau” surroundings

**La Fontaine** Manama 17230123

This is a tranquil refuge from the hustle and bustle of Manama with an art centre, cultural

Centre and expensive French restaurant, which is poorly rated

**International**

**Bapco Club** Awali 17753377

Great value Friday brunch plus small coffee shop serving light meals.

**British Club** Umm Al Hassam 17728245

British favourites, and you can eat by the pool. Need to be signed in if not a member

**The Country Club** Barbar

Offers a great outside play area for the kids

**Curry Country** Juffair 17537555

**Dilmun Club** Saar 17690926

Great for Friday brunch with various restaurant and family-friendly casual eatery

**JJs** Adliya 17742323

**La Mediterranee** Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Seef 17586499

**Muju** Dragon Hotel, Amwaj Island 16033833

Restaurant in one of Bahrain’s newest hotels

**Rendezvous Buffet Restaurant** Seef Mall 17587708

Popular family buffet restaurant with local favourites and international dishes

**Silks** Movenpick Hotel, Muharraq 17460000

Upmarket international restaurant

**Italian**

**Johnny Carino’s** Seef 17587878

**Café Italia** Adliya; Seef 17744774

Stylish restaurant with good pizza menu

**Capri Pizza** Budaiya Highway 17697707

Homely café-style pizzeria with good-value menu

**Chico’s** Adliya 17713710

This Italian offers excellent food and service but bookings necessary

**Luigi’s** Budaiya Highway 17693533

**Pastorito** Bahrain City Centre 17179300

Modern Italian eatery in the mall’s restaurant zone

**Primavera** Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Seef 17586499

Fabulous food, but rather expensive and you will need to book.

**Roma Restaurant** Umm Al Hassam 17725885

**Other**

**The Butcher Shop and Grill** Bahrain City Centre 17172323

Modern steakhouse in mall restaurant zone

**Jawad Dome food court** Barbar, off Budaiya Highway 17506070

Deli France café, Chilli’s, pizza, Thai, Chinese, burgers

**The Meat Company** Adliya 17742080

Popular South African steakhouse chain with the best steaks in town but pricey

**Trader Vic’s** Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Seef 17586555

This large Polynesian restaurant has sea views and lush garden surrounds.

**Yum Yum Tree** Food courts in various locations including Adliya and Hamala 17296296

The pasta is recommended

TIME TO LEAVE

Leaving is always a stressful time, but to make it as smooth as possible, give yourself at least six weeks. Prepare to move out of your home and stay elsewhere for the last few days. Here are a few points to consider:

## Certificate of Good Conduct

We strongly advise you to get this, as it may be required for any police, employment and security checks in future. You must organise it before you leave Bahrain and your current visa is cancelled. You need to go to the Ministry of Interior, General Directorate of Crime, Licenses and Certificates Division, opposite the Alumni Club in Adliya. Wear appropriate clothing when you attend and take with you:

* Photo taken on a dark blue background
* Passport: original and copy
* Visa: original and copy
* CPR: original and copy
* BD1 per copy of the certificate you are seeking
* All your old passports with copies of previous Bahrain residency visas.

**Change of Address**

For an annual fee you can ask the Post Office to redirect your mail.

**Deposits**

Collect the deposits that you gave to the DVD libraries and to any regular supplier e.g. water, gas supplier. Cancel your telephones and get your deposit back.

## Clubs

Cancel memberships to clubs and associations, as they will appreciate being told. There may be a refund of the fees for the part year outstanding.

**Selling your car/No claim bonus**

It is easier to sell your car early and hire a car for the remaining time, than to risk being left with an unsold vehicle. When you sell your car, we recommend you ensure YOU go with the purchaser to change the registration, as you may not be allowed out of the country if they have an accident and it is still in your name. Try placing notices on supermarket noticeboards, advertising in the GDN and placing a sign in your car window. Be careful about leaving your car at popular roadside “car sale” points, as police occasionally issue parking tickets. Get a statement of your no-claim bonus from your insurer.

## Settling Utilities and Telephone bills

Pay your electricity/telephone bills final account and get a receipt stating that the account is now closed. This often takes a week so allow plenty of time. Getting back your deposit can take time, so allow for this.

## Medical records and insurance

Get copies of your medical records from your doctor and dentist.

**We hope that you will be able to look back on your Bahrain adventure recalling happy times spent in good company**