

Bahrain - Travel facts and figures

Location: Middle East
Archipelago in the Arabian Gulf, east of Saudi Arabia
Official name: Kingdom of Bahrain

The King of the kingdom of Bahrain: H.M. Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa
The Prime Minister: H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa
The Crown Prince: H.H. Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa
Government type: constitutional monarchy

National emblem:

Formula 1

Bahrain International Circuit

The sixth annual Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix is almost upon us, and across the Kingdom there is enormous pride to be seen in the achievements of its people in bringing the world's biggest annual sporting series to the region. National colours are flying, international visitors are arriving and the promise of a bigger, better show than ever is hanging in the air.

Airshow

Bahrain International Airshow , 21-23 January 2010

The inaugural Bahrain International Airshow (BIAS) 2010 will provide a totally new concept to the global aerospace community. BIAS is set to stage one of the most influential and prestigious aerospace hospitality events in the region. This unique Business-to-Business event has been modelled by experts and will cater for the civil, defence and business aviation markets. The show will afford you an exclusive opportunity to focus on your clients and suppliers and to meet with visiting delegations.

The Sakhir Airbase is positioned in close proximity to the F1 Grand Prix Circuit and provides a perfect setting for this high-class and prestigious event.

National flag:

Geographic coordinates: 26° 00' N 50° 33' E

Area: 757.5 sq km

Highest point: Jabal Ad Dukhan 134 m

Unesco World Heritage Site: Bahrain Fort, or Qal'at al-Bahrain

Qal'at al-Bahrain is also known as the Portuguese Fort. Although the fort in its present, reconstructed, form reflects the most recent structure built by the Portuguese in the 16th century, archeological digs at the site have revealed a typical tell – an artificial mound created by many successive layers of human occupation. The earliest ruins prove that the site had great significance to one of the most important ancient civilizations of the region – the Dilmun civilization.

Population: 1.039,297 including non-nationals

Population density: 1454 / sq km

Capital: Manama, geographic coordinates 26° 13' N 50° 35' E

Population: 162.0000

Local time: GMT + 3 hours (no Daylight saving time)

Life expectancy: 75 years

GDP – per capita: \$37,200

Oil reserves: Bahrain has proven recoverable oil reserves of 124.6 million barrels.

Gas reserves: 92.03 billion cu m

Visa: Visas are required by all visitors to Bahrain except passport holders of the GCC States. All other visitors require one of the following visiting or tourist visas:

Two-Week Tourist Visas:

Tourist visas are issued for stays of two weeks to citizens of most but not all of the European Union (EU) countries, Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand and the USA. Applicants must possess valid, up-to-date passports and a return or onward ticket. A visa fee of BD5 (\$12) is applied and can be obtained at entry at the Bahrain International Airport. Tourist visas don't allow visitors to engage in any employment.

72 hour/7 day Visas

obtained on arrival at the Bahrain International Airport or at the King Fahad Causeway. In addition to a passport, the passenger must have a confirmed return/onward journey ticket for the visa application to be processed.

The best way to check your eligibility for a Bahraini visa is to visit the site www.evisa.gov.bh. Eligible nationalities can also apply for an electronic visa through this site.

Safety: Large demonstrations can occur at any time, can sometimes become violent but are typically NOT anti-Western. Avoid areas where crowds of people appear to be assembling.

Currency: Bahraini Dinar (BHD) is the functional currency and consists of smaller units of 1000 Fils. Bahraini Dinars are pegged to US Dollars that is equal to 378 Fils. ½ Dinar, 1 Dinar, 5 Dinars, 10 & 20 Dinars. Coins: 5 Fils, 10 Fils, 25, 50, 100 and 500 Fils.

Language: Arabic is the official language, but English is widely spoken.

Customs: The following goods may be imported into Bahrain by persons over 18 years of age without incurring customs duty:

- 200 cigarettes and 50 cigars and 250g of tobacco in opened packets.
- 1l of alcoholic beverages and six cans of beer (non-Muslim passengers only).
- 8oz of perfume.
- Gifts up to the value of BHD250 (approximately US\$600).

Climate: Bahrain has hot and humid summers and mild winters. Temperature from November till April averages between 15°C and 24°C. Weather could be colder from December to March. From July to September weather is hot with an average temperature of 36°C. Rain average is 77mm and water depth in the Arabian Gulf is 35m only.

Clothing: Lightweight summer clothing in cottons or blends is ideal for most of the year. Sweaters, a light jacket or a shawl may be needed for the evenings during the cooler months.

Religion: Islam is the official religion; other religions are also respected. Ramadan: Ramadan is the holy month of fasting when Muslims abstain from eating, drinking and smoking during daylight hours. As a sign of respect, visitors are also required to refrain from these activities in public between sunrise and sunset.
and 9.8% Others (Jewish, Hindu, Baha'ee, Sikh).

Public holidays in Bahrain 2010

- 1 January, New Year's Day.
- 26 February, Mouloud (Birth of the Prophet).
- 11 September, Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan).
- 17 November, Eid al-Adha (Feast of the Sacrifice).
- 7 December, Al-Hijrah (Islamic New Year).
- 16 December, Ashoura.
- 16 December, National Day (two days).

Friday is the general day of worship and a public holiday.

Weekend: Government, schools and commercial: Friday and Saturday.

Electricity: 220-240 Volt / 50 Hz in all the areas, except in A'Ali "120 Volt". The most frequently used plugs are the three-pin (UK) type.

Alcohol: To the surprise of many people - unlike most Arabian Gulf countries, alcohol is readily available for sale in Bahrain. There are pubs, bars and retail outlets.

Credit cards: American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are accepted in hotels, major stores and restaurants. Smaller shops may prefer to deal in cash. ATMs are available in major cities.

Business hours: Public sector working hours: from 7.30 am to 14.15 pm from Sunday to Thursday (5 days a week). Private sector: working hours differ, but most corporates work from 8 am to 1 pm and then from 3 pm to 5.30 pm five days a week. Shops and malls: either non-stop from 10 am to 10 or 11 pm or from 8.30 am to 12.30 pm, and then from 3.30 pm to 5.30 pm 6 days a week. Some of the shops work on Friday morning with different timing. Banks: from 7.30 am to 12 pm from Sunday to Thursday. Some of the branches open from 3.30 pm to 5.30 pm. During Ramadan, working hours differ from one business to another.

Health: Bahrain provides free health services to its people and expatriate population. Private specialized hospitals also offer excellent health services. Moreover, there are hundreds of pharmacies. Tap water is clean and free, though, bottled water is safer and can be found in shops and supermarkets or delivered to your home.

Hotels: As Bahrain is a small country, most visitors stay in Manama and the suburbs which offer a choice of hotel accommodation to fit all pockets, ranging from 5-star comfort to family-run hotels and 1-star budget establishments. **Resorts:** The deluxe hotels are well represented by international chains with some providing a meet-and-greet service from the airport if sufficient notice is given. All the resorts offer an opulent environment with landscaped gardens, pools, clean beach access and fine dining.

Facilities for the physically challenged: Most hotels and public places provide facilities and make special arrangements for physically challenged visitors.

Social conventions: Muslim religious laws should be observed. Women are expected to dress modestly and men should dress formally for most occasions. Alcohol is tolerated, with non-Muslims allowed to drink alcohol in the city's bars, restaurants, clubs and hotels. Rules regarding smoking are similar to those in Europe and in most cases it is obvious where not to smoke, except during Ramadan when it is illegal to eat, drink or smoke in public during daylight hours.

Photography: Normal tourist photography is acceptable but it is considered offensive to photograph Muslim women. It is also courteous to ask permission before photographing men. In general, photographs of government buildings or military installations should not be taken.

Mobile: telephony is widespread and of excellent quality. Roaming agreements exist with some international mobile phone companies. Coverage is average.

Traffic system: Driving in Bahrain is on the right-hand side.

Getting around: The easiest way to get around Bahrain is by car, although taxis and chauffeured cars are also widely available. Traffic signs are in both Arabic and English. Motorways and major roads in the northern third of Bahrain are four to six lanes wide and well maintained.

An International Driving Permit is not required but can be welcome.

Getting there: Gulf Air is a major international airline serving over 40 destinations worldwide.

Bahrain International Airport (BAH): Bahrain International Airport is a key hub airport in the region, providing a gateway to the Northern Gulf. The airport is the major hub for Gulf Air which provides 52% of overall movements and operates 377 weekly international services. 35 other international airlines including British Airways, Cathay Pacific, KLM and Lufthansa operate a total of 349 services per week to a total of 52 destinations. <http://www.bahrainairport.com>

Bahrain Gateway (KBSP): The Khalifa Bin Salman Port and its adjacent Industrial Area is located towards the North Eastern extremity of Bahrain. 5kms from the Bahrain International Airport. The new port will attract more than 100,000 cruise tourists annually. This new facility will ensure an excellent level of services to the shipping lines and support Bahrain's industrial growth.

Internet country code: .bh

Telephone dialing code: + 973