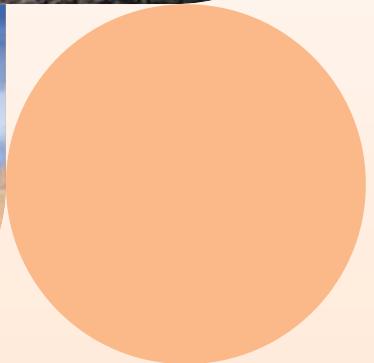


welcome to BAHRAIN

PCS Guide 2026–2027





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- Vaccination
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- Lab Analysis
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- Pet Supplies



Road 90, Block 1014, Building 2241A,
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09:00 am - 8:00 pm



animalcare-clinic.net



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Emergency +973 33542333



animalcareclinic2@gmail.com

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WELCOME TO BAHRAIN



EMERGENCY INFORMATION

On-base phone: 911

Cell phone: +973-1785-4911

This will reach the NSA Bahrain emergency dispatch and should be used whether the emergency is on or off base.

Bahraini emergency number: 999

This service will be in Arabic and is not recommended for the quickest response.

NAVAL STATION BAHRAIN WEBSITE



In Bahrain, uniforms are **not** permitted to be worn off base.

NEWCOMER BRIEFINGS

The installation newcomer's Area Orientation (AO) and Inter-Cultural Relations (ICR) briefs are required for active-duty and civilian personnel. Family members are encouraged to attend. The course will cover information about Bahrain, the local area and intercultural relations.

► **To sign up, email:**

Bahrain.newcomers@me.navy.mil

VISA & CPR

If you are PCSing to Bahrain for longer than three months, you must have a visa issued into your official passport to legally stay in the country. Use this visa when entering or exiting Bahrain. The installation Immigration Office issues Bahrain visas.

In addition, you must obtain a Central Population Registry (CPR) card which is the identification needed for contracts and registrations in Bahrain. This includes things like vehicle registration, internet and other utilities. After attending AO and ICR briefs, visit the installation Immigration Office to obtain your CPR card.

LODGING

► **Temporary Lodging Allowance (TLA)**

- Personnel who are paid E-5 and above are required to book lodging at the Navy Gateway Inn and Suites (NGIS). If NGIS rooms are not available, personnel must obtain a certificate of non-availability and may book a hotel off base.
- Personnel who are frocked E-5 and below will be assigned lodging in barracks.

Personnel in the NGIS or off-base hotels will receive a Temporary Lodging Allowance (TLA) entitlement for the actual cost of lodging for up to a maximum of 45 days. It is required that you pay your hotel up front in 10-day increments, and request the TLA reimbursement from the Housing Office. A final zero-balanced receipt must be filed with your final request. Civilians reconcile on a 30-day cycle (up to 90 days).

GROCERIES

The Navy Exchange (NEX) has a small commissary area located on the first floor of the Freedom Souq. NEX privileges are available for military and civilians on orders to work in Bahrain. For alcohol purchases, you must be 21 years old or older and can sign up at the customer service counter for the ration program; bring your orders and military ID.

The commissary is open daily 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

► **Off-base grocery stores include large supermarkets, convenience stores and specialty markets.**

- LuLu Hypermarkets, Alosra Supermarkets and Al Jazira supermarkets are large grocery stores that offer off-base home delivery.
- HyperMax is a supermarket with groceries and other home goods.
- Cold stores are convenience shops with a small selection of grocery items.
- The Central Fish Market and adjacent Central Vegetable Market downtown Manama open daily at 4 a.m. and are the best places for fresh seafood and produce.

MEAL DELIVERY

There are lots of options for quick meal delivery in Bahrain. Here are a few apps to try:

- Talabat | www.talabat.com
- Ahlan | ahlanapp.com
- Jahez | www.jahez.net

KIDS

- Pre-register for on-installation childcare at www.militarychildcare.com.
- Begin DoDEA school registration at www.dodea.edu/registration.

OFF-LIMITS AREAS

Certain areas within the Kingdom of Bahrain are prohibited or have curfew restrictions.



Scan for a Google map of off-limits area, or search "Bahrain Off-Limits Areas."

continued on page 8

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Dental

Dental Implants - Orthodontics (Metal Brackets - Clear Brackets - Clear Aligners)
Wisdom Tooth Extraction - Porcelain Veneers - Teeth Whitening - Gummy Smile
Pediatric Dentistry - Root Canal Treatment - Dental Filling - Oral Healthcare Restorative

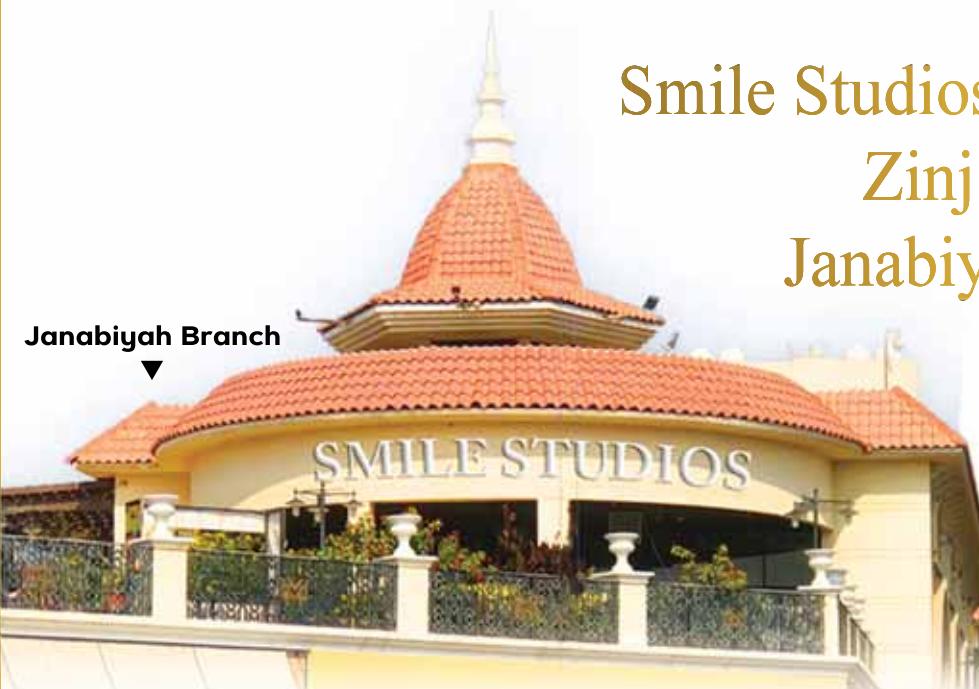
Derma

Face Deep Cleaning - Thread Lifts - Hydrafacial - HIFU - Body Contouring Fractional
Microneedling - Injectable treatments - Botox - Fillers - Meso - Peeling Treatments - Laser Hair
Removal - Skin Booster Treatment

Plastic Surgery

Face and Neck lifts - Rhinoplasty (nose reshaping), Eyelid lift and Ear reshaping - Breast
augmentation, reduction and lift - Gynecomastia (male breast) reduction - Abdominoplasty
(Tummy tuck), Liposuction, Fat grafting and Body lifts - Reconstructive Surgeries

Smile Studios Medical Center
Zinj Branch
Janabiyah Branch



Janabiyah Branch



Zinj Branch

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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continued from page 6

BANKING

Getting an account through the Navy Federal Credit Union will eliminate headaches when paying bills, transferring money, making purchases, getting cash and managing funds between U.S. dollars and Bahraini dinar.

NAVY FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Navy Federal Credit Union is the only financial institution on the installation. However, Western Union is available at the Navy Exchange.

ATM Locations On Base:

- NFCU ATM #1 Bldg 261: Ground floor next to Navy Federal branch office.
- NFCU ATM #2 Bldg 261: First floor next to the Wi-Fi Lounge and movie theatre.
- NFCU ATM #3 Bldg 263: Outside of the Housing Service Center at the Pavilion/ Shawarma Truck.

DEBIT & CREDIT CARDS

Most Bahraini businesses accept debit and credit cards, but a few may not. Currency exchange rates may apply.

- It's always best to carry Bahraini dinar when off installation.
- There are sometimes transaction fees when using debit cards, so having cash can be more economical.

PAYING BILLS

The most common way to pay bills for Bahraini services such as rent and utilities is through a Navy Federal Credit Union account. You will need to withdraw funds in U.S. dollars equivalent to the amount in Bahraini dinar in the form of a cashier's check, and then take the check to the Dinar Exchange office where it will be converted into a Bahraini's dinar check.

If you are not a Navy Federal member, you may cash a personal check at the Personnel Support Detachment (PSD) cash cage, or withdraw funds in U.S. dollars from an ATM and then visit the Dinar Exchange.

MWR Dinar Exchange

Bldg. 261 (Freedom Souk), 1st floor

Hours: Open daily, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The Dinar Exchange offers monetary exchange services such as currency exchange, rent and EWA checks, vehicle registration, export, bill payments, driving license, CPR issues and renewals and traffic offenses.

LEGAL SERVICES

If you need help managing financial or family affairs back home, or have U.S.-based legal problems that arise during your stay in Bahrain, the Region Legal Service Office (RLSO) EURAF-CENT Detachment Bahrain is here to help you.

RLSO BAHRAIN

Bldg. 100, room 110 DD

Phone: +973-1785-4237 | DSN: 318-439-4237

Email: nsa.legal.assistance@us.navy.mil

Key legal issues for personnel coming to Bahrain:

- Special Powers of Attorney (SPOA): If you are coming to Bahrain unaccompanied or need people to act on your behalf while you are away, generate your own SPOA online at www.jag.navy.mil/legal_services/SPOA.htm and get it notarized at the RLSO office.
- Likely to give birth in Bahrain? A marriage certificate is required to issue a child's birth certificate. Contact RLSO Bahrain for other specific requirements you should be aware of before giving birth in Bahrain.
- Other legal issues: Wills and estate planning, divorce, non-support (child or spouse), child custody, adoption, paternity, landlord and tenant problems, consumer fraud or abuse, military rights and benefits, naturalization and immigration, etc.
- Benefit Pay is an app that allows users to pay and transfer funds using their smart devices in Bahrain in a fast, secure and convenient manner. Conditions required: CPR Identity, local bank account (ila bank is highly recommended) and a local phone number with active SMS.

CELL PHONES

For safety and command recall purposes, you are required to have cell phone service while in Bahrain. Upon arrival, switch your phone to airplane mode to avoid unexpected charges until you establish service. Your American phone must be unlocked to use in Bahrain.

WI-FI COMMUNICATION

When you first arrive, it is helpful to use one of these popular texting apps that are free to use over Wi-Fi.

- WhatsApp
- Facetime
- Signal
- Facebook Messenger

U.S. NUMBER

Some U.S. providers offer international rates that you can add on to your current plan. This option allows you to keep your U.S. phone number, but may require occasional verifications to ensure you can receive messages.

BAHRAINI PROVIDERS

Many people prefer using a pre-paid service or plan option with a local provider in Bahrain. This allows you to purchase a SIM card that includes a large amount of data to use within a single month. You can then set up automatic monthly payments with a web account, or add data as needed online, at grocery and convenience stores, and at SADAD kiosks.

- **STC Bahrain**—offers cell phone plans, home internet with broadband, mobile and fiber, plus car and device insurance. STC users can enjoy discount coupons for entertainment with the STC App.
- **Batelco**—offers mobile and home internet with fiber, mobile broadband and fixed line options.
- **Zain Bahrain**—offers mobile plans and home broadband, plus discount coupons using the Zain App. ■



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NSA Bahrain

Freedom Souq, Bldg. 261, Administration Support Unit
Manama, Bahrain

ISA Air Base

Bldg. 5111, Bahrain, Al Qurayan, AE
(open Tuesday and Thursday)

ATM Addresses:

Bldg. 263, Manama, Bahrain

Bldg. 3300, Bahrain, Al Qurayan, AE

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TRANSPORTATION IN BAHRAIN ➤



DRIVER'S LICENSES

A valid stateside driver's license is needed to drive your vehicle. No other local or international licenses are required to drive a personally-owned vehicle or a government-owned vehicle in Bahrain.

MOTORCYCLE REQUIREMENTS

The Navy Motorcycle Rider Safety Course is a military-directed, local training required to legally drive a motorcycle as a U.S. service member in Bahrain. Check with the base Safety Office or your command's motorcycle safety representative upon arrival to ensure that you are up-to-date with this requirement. You must verify completion of the training and/or register for either the beginner's course (three-day class) or the refresher course (one-day class).

SHIPPING A VEHICLE

Ship your vehicle 90 days before you PCS to ensure it arrives soon after your arrival to Bahrain. There is no restriction on the age of a car you bring to the island; however, local laws prohibit the sale of the vehicle if it is older than five years.

- As per JTR Entitlement, only one vehicle is allowed per active-duty member along with their dependents during their tour.
- Do not bring an electric or low-sulfur diesel vehicle to Bahrain.
- You may ship your motorcycle if it is over 100cc.
- Shipping motorcycles, mopeds, dirt bikes or quad bikes under 100cc to Bahrain is prohibited.
- Vehicles older than 5 years will not be allowed to remain, or be resold, in Bahrain and must be exported when you depart.
- Other vehicles you own in the U.S. can be sold, left with a friend or family member, or kept in storage (if you're in the Coast Guard).

BUYING A VEHICLE

You may buy a new or used car from dealers and private sellers in Bahrain. Buying a vehicle in compliance with U.S. specification from another military member is tax free.

Be aware that vehicles sold in local dealerships are not in compliance with U.S. specification, and cannot be shipped to the U.S. Contact NAVSUP FLC BAHRAIN Personal Property Shipping Office (PPSO) at DSN 439-4265 or email: m-ba-nsapersonalpropertybahrain@me.navy.mil for guidance.

VEHICLE REGISTRATION

Shipped vehicles are required to be insured and registered with the government of Bahrain prior to being picked up from the Vehicle Processing Center.

► **NOTE:** If your car is 10 years or older, you can only get liability insurance.

Visit the PPSO to obtain customs documentation and details on how to arrange registration with the government of Bahrain.

Personal Property Shipping Office (PPSO)

Bldg. 36 | Phone: +973-1785-4265
DSN: 318-439-4265

INSURANCE

The Dinar Exchange can be a "one-stop shop" for car insurance, inspection and registration (fees vary).

What to bring to register your vehicle:

- ✓ Documents from PPSO
- ✓ Proof of Insurance
- ✓ Local registry card (CPR)
- ✓ Registration fee (approx. \$97)

INSPECTION

Each vehicle is required to be inspected annually. Ensure that your vehicle always has the required equipment at all times, not just for its annual inspection.

FUEL

There is no gas station on the installation, and no discounted fuel program. You will need to fuel your vehicle at local Bahraini gas stations. Some gas stations do not offer card payment and only accept cash.

TAXI SERVICES

Using a taxi service like Uber is also a convenient way to get around Bahrain. The Uber App allows you to enter your destination, check and agree to prices and book your ride. ■



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Your Local Sales Representative is: **Graham Nolan**

gnolan@militarycars.com | Cell: +973 36751379 | DSN: (318) 439 3242



HOUSING IN BAHRAIN

ON BASE

Only active-duty personnel who are ranked E-5 and below will be assigned lodging in the Unaccompanied Housing (barracks) at NSA Bahrain.

Unaccompanied Housing (UH)

NSA 1: Bldg. 266 | NSA 2: Bldg. 765
Phone: +973-1785-9674 | DSN: 318-439-9674
Hours: Open daily 24 hours

OFF BASE

There is no accompanied housing on base. All paid E-5 and above, accompanied personnel and DOD civilians will live off base.

Be prepared to pay the first month's rent out of pocket. If you foresee a monetary shortfall before arriving in Bahrain, you are authorized to request one month of Advance Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA).

Begin looking for housing by attending the Housing Services Briefing.

HOUSING SERVICE CENTER (HSC)

Bldg. 265
Phone: +973-1785-4104/6732
DSN: 318-439-4104
Hours: Sunday – Thursday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
(1 p.m. on Tuesdays)

HOUSE HUNTING

HSC Counselors assist newcomers in locating a residence off-base, and can provide local housing market information. The HSC can help negotiate rental contracts in coordination with the landlord and can explain lease agreements. There are two methods you may employ to find a home.

- Realty Agents.** Visit the HSC for a list of approved rental agents and managers. There are typically more homes available via realtors than there are listed online. All realtor fees are incurred by the landlord. Agents will assist in home viewings.

- Online.** Search www.homes.mil for available residences within your 25 percent FP threshold. During peak PCS season, from June to September, check daily for new listings. Visit the HSC in-person to schedule a house viewing, this service is available at specific times during the workweek.

LEASE SIGNING

Once you find a home, inform the HSC who will provide a pre-contract and schedule follow-up appointments.

- Pre-Contract.** You will fill out and sign the pre-contract with the landlord or realty agent, who will also need to provide accompanying documents.
- Lease Drafting.** The pre-contract must be returned to the HSC so they may draft the lease.
- Residential Inspection.** All homes must be inspected and approved by the HSC before tenants are permitted to move in.
- Lease Signing.** The landlord (or authorized representative) and tenant must come to the HSC to sign the lease. You will receive copies of the lease agreement.

RENT AND UTILITIES

You are responsible for paying monthly rent and utilities. The tenant pays the landlord or property manager directly. Utilities include electricity, water, BTUs (if separate) and municipality tax. Civilians may negotiate an inclusive lease through the HSC.

ELECTRICITY & WATER

The Electricity Water Authority (EWA) bill will be maintained under the landlord's name. The landlord will provide you with the EWA bill and BTU (if applicable), and you will pay the landlord.

- Your first month's rent is due on the move-in date and every month thereafter.
- It is preferable to pay via a certified check or an electronic fund transfer via the Dinar Exchange.

- Keep a record of all your rental and utility payments just in case they become lost or misrouted by the company billing you.

INTERNET AND PHONE

- STC Bahrain**—Offers cell phone plans, home internet with broadband, mobile and fiber, plus car and device insurance.
- Batelco**—Offers mobile and home internet with fiber, mobile broadband and fixed line options.
- Zain Bahrain**—Offers mobile plans and home broadband.

TELEVISION AND STREAMING SERVICES

- American Forces Network (AFN)**—Provides programming from current U.S. networks, movies, and sports programming via its streaming service at AFN Now. Download the App and sign up at afn-now.myafn.mil.
- Streaming Services**—Show availability will be based on your location. Example providers include Amazon Prime, Netflix, Hulu and OSN.

ALLOWANCES

Visit www.travel.dod.mil/Allowances/Overseas-Housing-Allowance to find current OHA rates.

OVERSEAS HOUSING ALLOWANCE (OHA)

OHA only covers the rent from active-duty members, on an exclusive lease (no utilities included). For civilians it can cover rent and utilities, if they have an inclusive lease.

- Advance OHA can be requested by obtaining a memo from the Housing Office for command approval.
- NMCRS also offers Household Setup Loans to assist with the cost of moving to Bahrain.

MOVE-IN HOUSING ALLOWANCE (MIHA)

MIHA exists to help cover the move-in costs associated with occupying an off-base home covered under the OHA program.

- Components of MIHA can be used to improve the security at your new home, visit the HSC for details.



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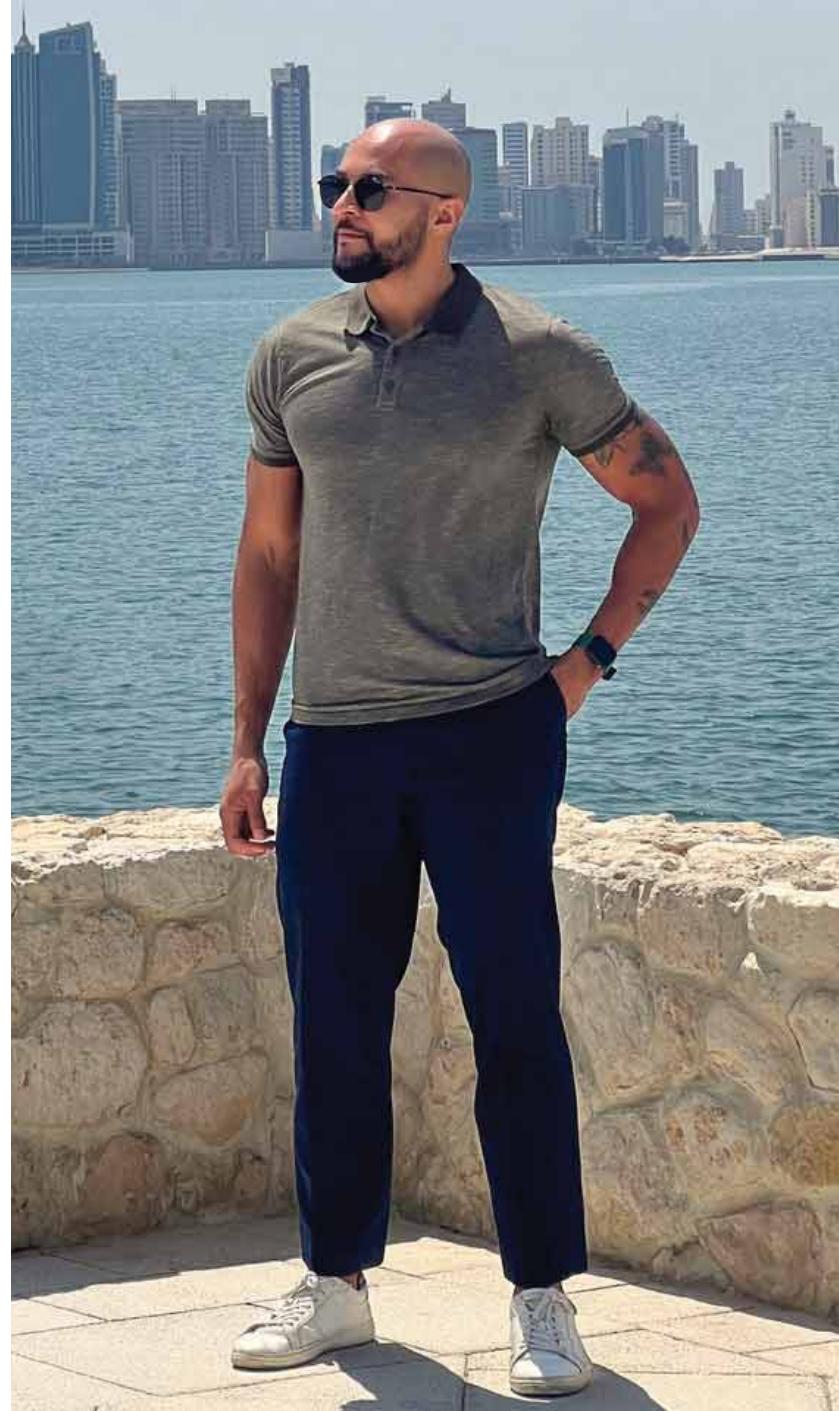


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continued from page 12

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

There is no temporary furniture program, but arrangements can be made with the Household Goods and Transportation Office.

When your household goods are delivered, make sure every box that was shipped has arrived by marking each item off the inventory list as it is unloaded. Take note of any damage to your household goods, and any damage caused to your home during delivery.

FILING A CLAIM

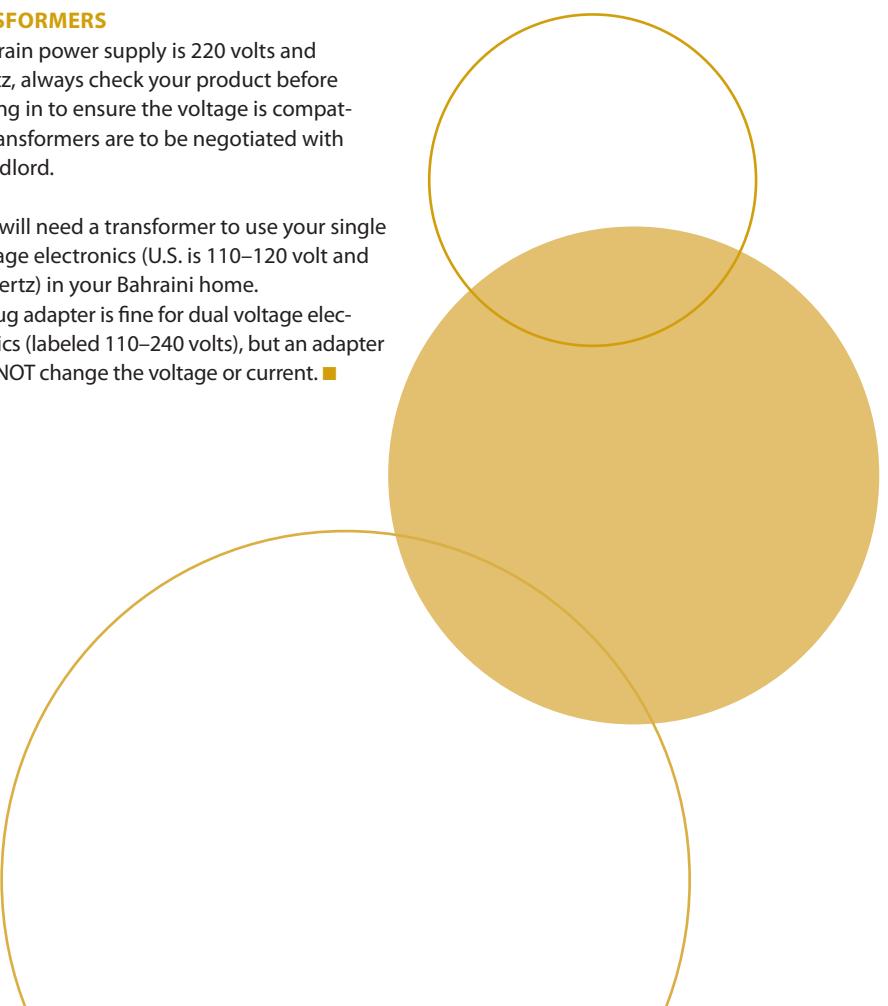
You have 75 days from the scheduled delivery date to submit a notice of loss or damage report in the Defense Personal Property System. From then, you will have nine months to submit your claim in order to be eligible for a full replacement value.

- Take photos of your damaged goods.
- Submit purchase receipts.
- Keep any paperwork until all claims are processed.

TRANSFORMERS

As Bahrain power supply is 220 volts and 50 hertz, always check your product before plugging in to ensure the voltage is compatible. Transformers are to be negotiated with the landlord.

- You will need a transformer to use your single voltage electronics (U.S. is 110–120 volt and 60 hertz) in your Bahraini home.
- A plug adapter is fine for dual voltage electronics (labeled 110–240 volts), but an adapter will NOT change the voltage or current. ■



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HEALTHCARE IN BAHRAIN



The Naval Branch Health Clinic (NBHC) in Bahrain provides primary care to beneficiaries stationed at Bahrain. Inpatient care will be referred to local host-nation facilities.

NAVAL BRANCH HEALTH CLINIC BAHRAIN

Bldg. 110
Phone: +973-1785-6110
DSN: 318-439-6110
Appointment Line: +973-1785-4260
DSN: 318-439-4260

TRICARE nurse advice line toll free:
8000-0453 | +973-8000-0453
TRICARE International SOS (24/7 urgent care) toll free: 800-81346 | +44-20-8762-8133
TRICARE customer service toll free:
8000-4724 +44-20-8762-8384
TRICARE referrals office DSN: 318-439-8158



EMERGENCY CARE

There are no emergency or inpatient services at NBHC. If you need to be seen immediately for an emergency, go to one of the preferred hospitals.

- Off base: 999
- On-base cell phone: +973-1785-4911
- On-base DSN: 4911

continued on page 18

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General Dental
Practitioner
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Dr. Mohammad Khair
Periodontist-Implant
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ZINJ - JANABIYAH

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continued from page 16



OFF-BASE TREATMENT

Inpatient and specialty care not offered at NBHC Bahrain will be referred off base. While there may be some cultural and treatment differences in Bahrain, rest assured that the medical standard of care you receive is the highest quality.

Off-base referrals are handled by the TRICARE Referrals office. NBHC staff collaborate and has established partnerships with host nation providers at preferred facilities.

DENTAL CARE

The Dental Clinic on the installation provides comprehensive acute dental care for active duty members. Retirees and government employees may receive care on a space-available basis.

Dependents must rely on Bahraini providers for their dental needs. It is recommended to sign up for the TRICARE Family Dental program to cover costs of off-base dental treatment.

PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH

During your pregnancy, you can receive prenatal care at the base clinic, if you are eligible for care. The clinic does not handle delivery and childbirth. They must take place off base.

RESOURCES

The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS) holds Budget for Baby Workshops which provide financial education and resources to expectant parents.

Women Infant and Child (WIC) Overseas provides resources for qualifying families with infants, children, pregnant women, postpartum women and breastfeeding women.

Bldg. 265 | +973-1785-4781
www.tricare.mil/wic

NEWBORN DOCUMENTATION

At the beginning of your pregnancy, the clinic will provide you with an informational package detailing the steps you must take in order to obtain the following documentation for your baby. A marriage certificate is required to issue a child's birth certificate for children born in Bahrain.

- Social Security Number
- Enrollment in DEERS
- U.S. passport
- Consulate Report of a Birth Abroad (birth certificate).
- Command Sponsorship Database.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

► Fleet and Family Support Center

Phone: +973-1785-4046
 DSN: 318-439-4046

FFSC has non-medical counseling for all personnel on base including individuals, couples and families. FFSC also has non-clinical life-skills classes in topics like anger and stress management.

► Chaplains

Phone: +973-1785-4303
 DSN: 318-439-4303

The chapel is a good place to start if you don't know where to go; they will help you find the resource that fits your needs. Chaplains offer counseling for all personnel regardless of religious preference. Discussions with chaplains are 100 percent confidential.

► Military & Family Life Counselors (MFLCs)

MFLCs offer free non-medical anonymous sessions with specialists for adolescents, children and families. For youth, contact the MFLC via the DoDEA schools.

- Adult/Family via MWR: +973-3686-5540
- Elementary school: 3831-3770
- Middle/High school: 3825-1625



► **Military OneSource**

www.militaryonesource.mil/
non-medical-counseling

Confidential, short term non-medical counseling is offered for free via Military OneSource for active duty members and their dependents. Visit the website to access options via phone, chat or video.

► **Behavioral Health Department,
NBHC Bahrain**

Phone: +973-1785-4169 | DSN: 318-439-4169

The Behavioral Health Department offers reportable short term mental health evaluations and referrals, sexual assault case management and crisis response. No appointment needed for readiness clinic, Sunday-Thursday 7:30 to 9:30 a.m.

► **The Veterans Crisis Line (VCL) and Military Crisis Line (MCL)**

Available 24/7 for free confidential mental health support.

- Call: 844-702-5495
- DSN: 988
- Text: 838255
- Online chat: www.veteranscrisisline.net



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10 Books to Strengthen Your Self-Care

By Tamala Malerk



Sometimes it can be difficult to zero in on our own self-care. The books in this list, however, are good resources that offer guidance and encouragement to become your best self.

From breaking bad habits, overcoming anxiety and becoming more disciplined to understanding holistic health and incorporating mythology into your sense of self, this list has something for everyone. There are books for adults, teens and kids included.

"Anxiety for Beginners: A Personal Investigation"

by Eleanor Morgan (2016)

Morgan combines her personal experiences living with anxiety with input from industry experts to help readers comprehend the complexities of anxiety. Morgan looks not only at her own anxiety but why anxiety is so prevalent across the world.

"Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones"

by James Clear (2018)

Clear is "one of the world's leading experts on habit formation" and this book is here to help you form good habits in a lasting and manageable way. The methods he includes involve making time for new habits, overcoming a lack of willpower and motivation and much more.

"Body into Balance: An Herbal Guide to Holistic Self-Care"

by Maria Noel Groves (2016)

Discover how to tune into your body and its needs and signals. This book includes information about your body's systems, and you can learn about herbal remedies through photographs with in-depth instructions.

"Iron John: A Book About Men"

by Robert Bly (1990)

Bly combines his own narrative with those from men from mythology and legend to explore what makes men, well, men. Look to the past with Bly to find ways to embrace "masculinity" and be emotionally centered.



"Self-Care For Kids: A Guided Self-Care Journal and Activity Book to Teach Healthy Habits and Empower Kids in Fun and Creative Ways" by Andrea Barkley (2021)

This interactive journal allows children to take control of their habits and learn all about gratitude, self-love, generosity and mindfulness. This journal is designed with activities to last an entire year.

"Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself" by Kristin Neff (2011)

This step-by-step guide is there to help you care more about yourself and achieve your dreams. Neff explores self-compassion as an alternative to self-esteem as a path to happiness through a combination of empirical research, personal stories and humor.

"Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior"

by Chögyam Trungpa (1984)

Learn all about the non-violent practices of Japanese samurai, medieval European knights and warrior-kings of Tibet that made them powerful. Trungpa focuses on skills for mind and body synchronization, openness, fearlessness and discipline.

"The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens: The Ultimate Teenage Success Guide" by Sean Covey (1997)

This book takes me back to my freshman year of high school where I learned all about proactivity, synergy and sharpening my saw. This book is great for transitioning teens whether it's a new move, school or grade.

"The Witch's Book of Self-Care: Magical Ways to Pamper, Soothe, and Care for Your Body and Spirit"

by Arin Murphy-Hiscock (2018)

Why not get witchy with your self-care? Through these methods, you can channel joy, soothe sadness and stress, stay healthy and embrace your strength.

"You Are Your Best Thing: Vulnerability, Shame Resilience, and the Black Experience" by Tarana Burke and Brené Brown (2021)

Brown, best known for her viral TEDx talk on vulnerability, teamed up with Burke to gather this collection of essays from Black women about discussing the intersection between the Black experience and vulnerability, shame and healing. ■

KEY FACILITIES IN BAHRAIN



MWR

www.navymwrbahrain.com

- **Community Recreation | Bldg. 261, 2nd deck (Freedom Souq)**

The Community Recreation office is your source for tickets and travel opportunities, equipment rental and community classes.

- **Single Sailor Liberty Center | Bldg. 305**

Offers a space for hanging out and relaxation, plus recreational activities, trips throughout the Kingdom of Bahrain for single sailors and geo-bachelors.

- **Fitness Center | Bldg 261 (Freedom Souq)**

The fitness center has free weights, cardio machines, a climbing wall, and health and wellness programs. There is also an unmanned fitness facility, the Fleet Park Warrior Zone, near the softball field, a fitness pool in Bldg. 37 and a recreational pool near the skate park.

- **Entertainment**

NSA Bahrain also has a library (Bldg. 18), bowling center (Bldg. 70) and movie theater (Bldg. 261).

FFSC

Bldg. 100 | Phone: +973-1785-4046

DSN: 318-439-4046

The Fleet and Family Services Center (FFSC) will be one of your first stops when arriving aboard NSA Bahrain for the mandatory Newcomer's Orientation. They also offer programs designed to help you and your family while stationed in Bahrain.

- Relocation Assistance
- Intercultural Relations classes that cover buying items like carpet and jewelry while in Bahrain, Arabic culture and the Arabic language
- Family advocacy resources
- Financial management classes in debt management, car and home buying and budgeting.
- Life skills in anger management, stress, deployment support and goal setting.
- Counseling for individuals, families and crisis intervention.
- Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP): classes, meetups, school connection.
- Transition Assistance program: separation, retirement, CAPSTONE, educational track and pre-separation counseling.

SAPR

Bldg. 24 | 24/7 Response Line: +973-3940-3906

The Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program (SAPR) offers victim resources and options for reporting with or without an investigation.

POST OFFICE

Bldg. 261 (Freedom Souq)

Phone: +973-1785-3199 | DSN: 318-439-3199

Military postal facilities use gateways in the United States to connect your mail with the United States Postal Service (USPS). Shipping costs and procedures are roughly the same as those in the United States. All mail must have the following to be sent or received.

- First and last names of both sender and receiver
- Recipient or sender names must match those affiliated with the military postal box
- A customs form to ensure the contents abide by local area restrictions

AFN

BROADCASTING AT 106.3 FM

The American Forces Network (AFN) broadcasts locally and online via the AFN Go app available at www.afngo.net/anfeurope.

NMCRS

Bldg. 100, Room 130A

Phone: +973-3941-5836 | DSN: 318-439-2914

Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS) provides financial, educational and other needs-based assistance to active duty, retired Sailors and Marines, their eligible family members and survivors. Contact NMCRS at bahrain@nmcrs.org to book an appointment or request information about eligibility. All services are confidential and include financial counseling and interest-free loans. Let NMCRS be your first resource, not your last resort.

RED CROSS

Emergency messages: 011-49-0703-115-2812

The Red Cross offers assistance handling emergency situations with family back in the U.S. and emergency communication with service members in Bahrain.

CHAPEL

Phone: +973-1785-4303

The chapel offers religious services and education for a variety of religions and denominations, pastoral counseling and non-faith-based coaching for personal spiritual resilience or life skills workshops through the Chaplains' Religious Enrichment Development Operation (CREDO). ■

RESOURCES FOR KIDS



Children may think of moving to Bahrain as an exciting new adventure. They may also struggle with the big change. Luckily, there are resources at NSA Bahrain to help your kids settle into their new home.

Access online signups for Child and Youth program classes, special events, hourly care and sports at myffr.navyaims.com/cyms.html.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER (CDC)

Bldg. 267 (Bahrain School)
Phone: +973-1785-9092 | DSN: 318-439-9092
The CDC offers weekday childcare for children aged 6 weeks to 5 years old with age-appropriate rooms and a developmental curriculum. Hourly care is also offered on a space-available basis.

- Sign up at www.militarychildcare.com

SCHOOL AGE CARE (SAC)

Bldg. 267 (Bahrain School)
Phone: +973-1785-4901 | DSN: 318-439-4901
SAC is for school aged children who are attending kindergarten through 12 years old. The SAC facility offers before and after-school care that includes structured recreation and homework help in a dedicated building with a playground. Fees are based on Total Family Income (TFI).

- Hourly care is space-available. Register at the SAC and then you can sign up by calling or via the Navy CYP website myffr.navyaims.com/cyms.html.

TEEN CENTER

Bldg. 18 | Phone: +973-1785-4902
DSN: 318-439-4902
The teen center offers dependents in grades 7 to 12 a place to hang out, receive homework help, get involved in clubs, enjoy open recreation and participate in special events and field trips. Membership is free. Register your youth at the facility.

CHILD AND YOUTH SPORTS (CYS)

Bldg. 267 (in SAC) | Phone: +973-1785-4903
DSN: 318-439-4903
This program offers seasonal sports like football, baseball, basketball, soccer and others for youth, and Smart Start sports for kids aged 3–5. Youth must be registered with CYP before they can be registered for sports. ■

SCHOOL OPTIONS



The school liaison at NSA Bahrain is a good first resource for any questions regarding school options while stationed on the island. While most students attend a Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) school, homeschooling is also an option.

SCHOOL LIAISON PROGRAM

Bldg. 267 (Bahrain School)
Phone: +973-1785-6719 | DSN: 318-439-6719

DODEA SCHOOLS

All the DoDEA schools in Bahrain are located in the Bahrain Community School Complex. This 28-acre campus is in Juffair, adjacent to NSA Bahrain. While part of the DoDEA system, the schools are also sponsored by the Bahrain International School Association.

Enroll for DoDEA schools at www.dodea.edu/registration.

► BAHRAIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

bahraines.dodea.edu | www.thebahainschool.com
Phone: +973-1771-9829

The elementary school has students in Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and grades first through fifth. The school has a host nation class so students can learn about the culture and language of Bahrain. In addition, there are a variety of extracurricular activities.

► BAHRAIN MIDDLE-HIGH SCHOOL

bahrainmhs.dodea.edu | www.thebahainschool.com
Phone: +973-1772-7828

The middle and high students at the Bahrain School are combined into a single facility for students in sixth to twelfth grade. It is one of a handful of DoDEA schools that can offer graduates an International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma in addition to an accredited American high school diploma, plus extensive AP coursework. Being part of the international school system means that not all students are military kids and some live in the adjoining dormitory. The school also offers extracurricular activities, clubs and team sports.

HOME SCHOOLING

Home schooling is a legal option open to all active-duty military, DOD civilians and contractors. Your children may also be eligible for auxiliary services offered by DoDEA Europe at the Bahrain School. Contact the school liaison for support, information and to connect with home schooling groups in Bahrain. ■

PET INFORMATION



If you plan to bring your pet to Bahrain, begin early to ensure a smooth process.

NSA BAHRAIN VETERINARY TREATMENT FACILITY

Bldg. 328

Phone: +973-1785-4295 | DSN: 318-439-4295
nsabahrain.vetclinic@gmail.com

More than 30 days prior to arrival of the pet

Email the clinic a few months in advance of a move to ensure you have a complete checklist of requirements before planning your move.

1. Vaccination records, microchip information and the VTF checklist must be emailed to the VTF.
2. When you are within 30 days of arriving with your pet, the VTF will give your sponsor an Import Memo be taken in person to the Kingdom of Bahrain Animal Health Directorate where they will receive an Import Certificate. This certificate is good for 30 days and allows your pet entry into Bahrain.
3. The sponsor, with the Import Certificate, must pick up the pet at the airport.

Import Requirements

- ✓ Completed checklist from the VTF
- ✓ USDA endorsed Health Certificate issued within 10 days of travel to Bahrain. Note that U.S. military veterinarians can endorse, most civilian vets cannot.
- ✓ Two doses (including one within the previous calendar year) of the following:
 - Dogs: Rabies, DA2PP (distemper), Leptospirosis
 - Cats: Rabies, FVRCP (distemper)



- ✓ 15-digit ISO standard microchip
- ✓ Passing FAVN (rabies test) done within a year of arrival.
- ✓ Pets must quarantine in-home for 30 days after arrival, meaning they may not come into contact with other animals.

Pet Transportation Allowance

When PCSing overseas or outside the continental United States, service members may be authorized a Pet Transportation Allowance for the transportation costs of one pet. The reimbursement cap is \$2,000.

Pet Shipping Loan

NMCRS provides an interest free loan for the air shipping costs of up to two pets, in the amount of up to \$5,500. This may be used when the DOD cannot support travel for the pets, typically non-availability on an AMC flight.

LIFE FOR YOUR PET IN BAHRAIN

Because the veterinarian clinic on the installation has tight mission demands, many individuals utilize off-installation veterinarians. It is recommended to establish a relationship with a local Bahraini veterinarian for specialty and emergency needs.

If you plan to travel, visit the base VTF who can provide a list of local boarding facilities.

During the summer months, be sure to keep your pets hydrated and protect their paws from the hot ground.

Off base, the Paw School offers dog training, a dog hotel, doggy daycare, boarding school and a dog park. ■

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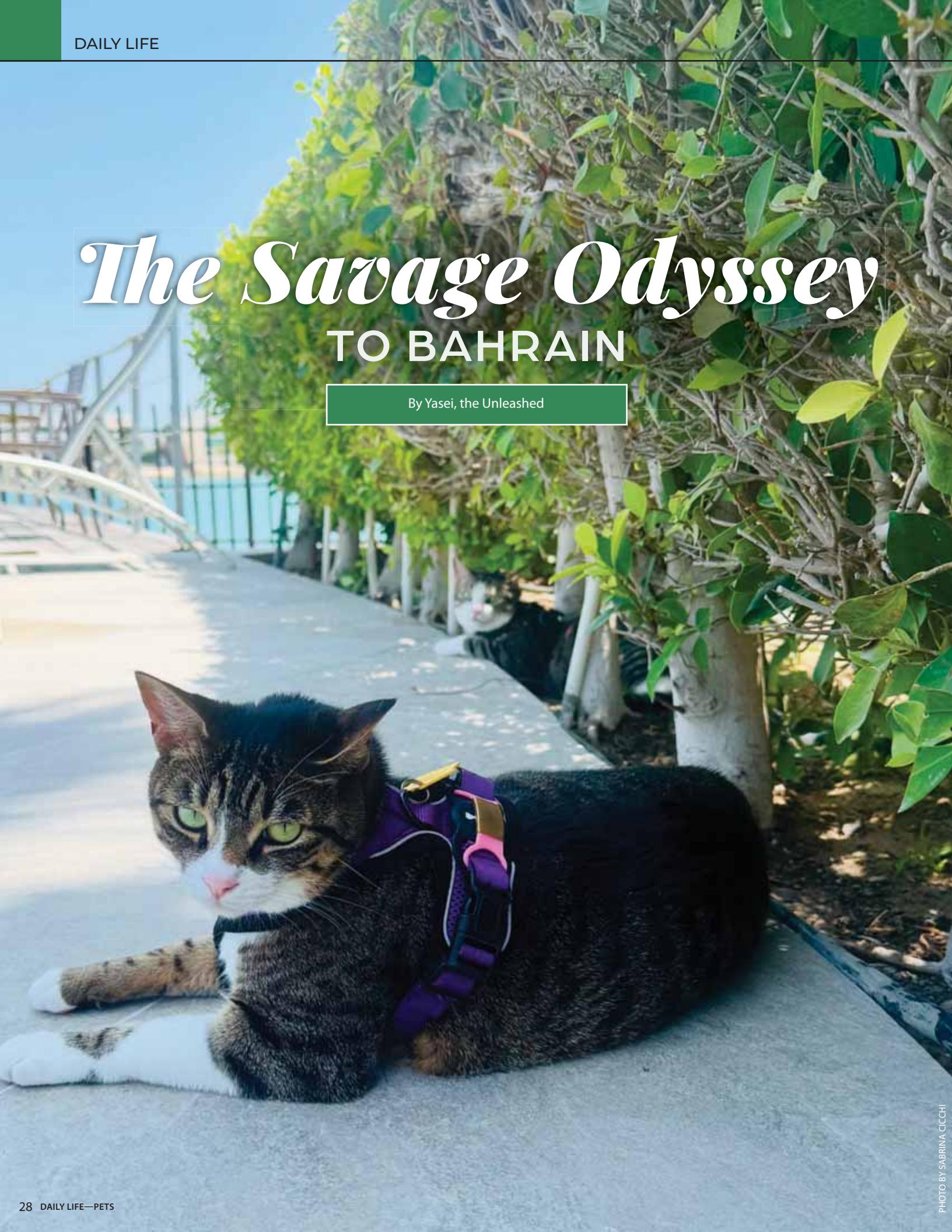
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The Savage Odyssey TO BAHRAIN

By Yasei, the Unleashed



Oi, gather round, pampered furballs and kibble-chasing mutts. I'm Yasei, King of Chaos, rooftop prowler and unrivaled slayer of all things string.

Refined? Never. Domesticated? Try me.

Rome. My turf. The rooftop battles there were the stuff of legend. Pigeons feared me. Leftover prosciutto was my bounty. Life was good until one day, my humans got that look in their eyes. You know the one—that overly determined, “we have goals” look.

Somehow, these humans decided that I was destined for greatness in the Kingdom of Bahrain. What follows is the untamed tale of my rise from the gritty streets of Rome through endless bureaucratic hoops, ancient roads, stormy seas and across the sand-blown gates of Bahrain.

PROPHECY OF THE MICROCHIP

Before we got too far, the humans carried out their first betrayal. They chipped me. Yeah, you heard that right. An ISO-standard, 15-digit identity mark stabbed between my shoulders. “It’s for your own good,” they cooed. Spare me the sentiment. Sure, it was just a tiny pinch, but it marked the start of endless paperwork tied to my name.

My pro tip for any four-legged rebels dreaming of seeing the world: Get chipped first. It’s the key to everything.

TRIALS OF VACCINATION

Once chipped, the humans decided I needed “protection.” Protection from what, I asked. The only dangerous things around me are my own claws.

First came the rabies vaccine. Fine, stick me; I’ll live. But what followed? Inspections of my sacred Rabies Certificate, stamped with my microchip number and signed in blue ink. BLUE INK.

Then came FVRCP. Another jab, same rules, but they made me do it TWICE. The humans had scrolls upon scrolls of dates and requirements to follow. I just scowled through it.

FATE AND THE FAVN TEST

If they thought I’d lie down for just another needle, they were mistaken. This time it was the FAVN test, and oh, how the humans fussed! They

needed proof that my majestic blood showed correct levels of rabies vaccine, valid within one year of reaching Bahrain. A picky little ritual, but they handled it while I reclined regally, napping in between dramatic glares.

THE CHAOS BEGINS

Next thing I know, I’m being shoved into a crate and crammed into my human’s beloved 2005 Toyota Sienna. The “Golden Swagger Wagon,” they called it. Swagger? Sure, if you’re into rattling cupholders and the faint smell of coffee stains.

With the Swagger Wagon loaded, we bolted south on Italy’s winding roads. It was chaos out there, humans muttering about wild drivers while I stalked the confines of my crate, glaring at birds that had the audacity to fly by. Every mile we drove, I plotted my escape. But for now, Naples loomed ahead, my first pit stop on this ridiculous saga.

WE SAIL ONWARD

Once in Naples, we holed up in the Navy Lodge, where the humans thought I’d behave. Ha! I scrambled up every surface, terrorized the blinds, and left fur on the cleanest parts of the bed.

Meanwhile, the Swagger Wagon was off on its own absurd adventure—to sail around the *Horn of Africa*. Yes, a car, on a boat. If that doesn’t sound ridiculous to you, check yourself. My so-called chariot was now chasing ocean waves while I was stuck dealing with the horrors of more vaccination schedules.

Vaccinated and ready, we pushed southward, now in a feeble rental car (RIP Swagger Wagon). The roads twisted, cliffs towered and the heat baked everything in sight. While the human munched on forbidden snacks, I plotted elaborate revenge, flicking my tail into their line of sight. At last, we reached the tip of Italy’s booted toe, where the shimmering blue waters teased my wild instincts.

THE FERRY OF FISH GUTS

The next leg brought us to the Strait of Messina, where Sicily awaited. We boarded a ferry. The scent in the air? Pure fish guts! My heaven, marred only by the infuriating “safety rules” that kept me locked in my crate.

Tails wagged, dogs barked; yet I sat there, a stoic masterpiece of wild elegance. When the ferry finally reached Sicily, I made sure to yowl loud enough for everyone to know I HAD ARRIVED.

Another car ride, another grueling stretch between me and comfort. The human seemed tired, but I wasn’t done with my complaints. I howled through every twist and turn until, finally,

the Navy Lodge at NAS Sigonella appeared like an oasis. I exploded from the crate, claws flexed and proceeded to claim every corner of that room.

Victory? Temporary. Bahrain still loomed ahead.

SUMMONING THE SACRED IMPORT MEMO

Over the next few days, the humans jumped through more hoops. The sacred Import Memo from Bahrain’s Veterinary Treatment Facility was secured, alongside all my pristine certificates. From there, the mission moved to the Ministry of Agriculture in Bahrain. Fees paid, forms stamped, yet another bit of bureaucracy conquered.

A REGAL HEALTH CERTIFICATE

Before the grand voyage, there was *one last hurdle*: the USDA health certificate. My human fussed over it endlessly, ticking boxes, checking dates, and whispering curses at deadlines. Even the APHIS 7001 form was inspected. I supervised masterfully, ensuring no detail was overlooked.

THE LEAP TO BAHRAIN

With every scroll and stamp finally in paw, we geared up for the skies. I boarded an AMC flight with a mix of disdain and curiosity. Commercial airlines weren’t my style anyway—I don’t do cargo holds. The final flight to Bahrain was smooth, barring my attempts to shred the crate lining.

Once on Bahraini soil, the customs gauntlet awaited. A nasal swab? Disrespectful. After two hours, the gates to my new kingdom opened.

MY REIGN IN BAHRAIN

And here I am now. Bahrain, land of sun and sand, mine for the taking. The windowsills are warm, the rugs are scuffed to perfection and every corner whispers of adventure.

While the humans pat themselves on the back for managing this move, we all know who truly orchestrated it. Me. Yasei, rogue feline extraordinaire.

To every aspiring cat with the wild heart of a traveler, take it from me. The microchip, the needles, the waiting? It’s all worth it when you find your sandy kingdom. Now, if you’ll excuse me, there’s a beach full of fish to sabotage.

Meow out. ■

PERSONAL ENRICHMENT



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Like many overseas locations, Bahrain can be a challenging environment for spouses who are seeking employment. It is common for applicants to wait six months or longer to land a job that aligns with their education and/or experience. It is helpful to look for job opportunities before PCSing and soon after you arrive.

The FFSC offers a **Family Employment Program** and can assist with job search strategies, effective resume writing, navigating federal employment, interview skills, salary negotiation and networking skills.

- **Government Positions:** Non-Appropriated Fund (NAF) and General Schedule (GS) positions are offered with Navy MWR, Child and Youth Programs (CYP) and other on-installation services. Hours range from full-time to flexible part-time with varying employment benefits. Search and apply at www.usajobs.gov.
- **DoDEA-Europe:** On-installation schools offer full and part-time employment as support staff, substitute teachers and administrative employees. Find certified teaching positions at: www.dodea.edu/offices/HR. Find local support positions at www.usajobs.gov.

- **Navy Exchange (NEX):** Jobs can be found by visiting www.NavyExchange.jobs and searching for Bahrain.
- **Defense Contractors:** Job opportunities with contractors are typically advertised via the company's human resources department. Your installation's contracting office and FFSC may have information about companies with contracts near you.
- **Home-Based Businesses:** Dependents and DOD personnel may run home-based businesses while stationed in Bahrain. Consult with the Legal Office to ensure you're following the correct guidelines.

EDUCATION

Thinking about pursuing a college degree? There are educational opportunities on the installation and online with universities who partner with the DOD.

- **Navy College** | Banz Warehouse, Bay 6
Phone: +973-1785-9446 | 318-439-9446
The Navy College Office (NCO) has a variety of educational services, from coursework and degrees to testing services and GED requirements. Visit www.navycollege.navy.mil for programs.

- **University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC)** | Bldg. 100, Room 9
Phone: +973-1785-9094 | DSN: 318-439-9094
UMGC offers on-site in person, online and hybrid courses for a variety of degree programs. Visit europe.umgc.edu/locations.html for information about your local campus.
- **Online coursework**
www.military.com/education
or www.militaryonesource.mil
Many U.S.-based colleges and universities offer online courses and discounts for military-affiliated students.

VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is a wonderful way to get involved in your community, keep your resume current and learn new skills.

- The FFSC is a hub for activities and events around NSA Bahrain and can help refer you to volunteer opportunities.
- Visit NMCRS for volunteer opportunities.
- Child and Youth Programs (CYP) depends on volunteer sports coaches.
- Reach out to organizations across your installation that align with a career field in which you are interested in.
- Find local spouses clubs, interest groups or sports organizations to join.
- Do you enjoy writing? Submit travel, lifestyle or local news stories to Europesubmissions@stripes.com for publication on the StripesEurope.com website. ■

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LOCAL CULTURE

DINING

Bahraini food is an eclectic mix of Middle Eastern, African, Indian and European cuisines. Much of the food is imported, reflecting Bahrain's history as a hub for trade.

FOODS TO TRY:

Machbos—This is Bahraini comfort food. Using a Bahrat spice blend and lime to flavor rice, it is cooked with chicken and saffron and often has a side of green chili sauce called *Daqoos*.

Shawarma—One of Bahrain's most popular street foods, this is a wrap containing spiced chicken or beef mixed with shredded veggies and sauces to your liking.

Harees—Often associated with Ramadan, this slow-cooked savory porridge is hearty and filled with lamb and clarified butter.

Balaleet—This is a breakfast dish made with sweetened noodles and often served with an omelet on top.

Halwa—Try this sweet jelly dessert made from cornstarch and sugar flavored with saffron, rosewater, cardamom and nuts.

TIPS FOR DINING:

- Restaurants are open during customary American hours, but many of the Bahraini people eat dinner later in the evening so most will stay open until midnight.
- Many people in Bahrain drink bottled water. The tap water on the installation is filtered and safe to drink.
- Some restaurants may not serve alcohol and pork due to Muslim religious practices.
- While tipping isn't always expected, it is welcome as a nod to good service.

SHISHA

Smoking is common in Bahrain, especially for men. Shisha cafes are prominent and the tradition of smoking tobacco from a waterpipe goes back centuries as a way to show hospitality.

SHOPPING

Shopping in Bahrain is top notch. There are massive modern malls with high-end designer brands, traditional open-air markets (souks) and custom clothing and furniture designers.

MALLS TO VISIT:

- Seef Mall Bahrain**—Has an amusement park inside.
- Dragon City Bahrain**—Large selection of home goods primarily imported from China.
- The Avenues**—Mall designed to look like an outdoor shopping town.
- City Centre Bahrain**—The biggest mall in Bahrain, complete with amusement and water parks.
- Moda Mall**—Luxury, high-end shopping destination.

MARKETS TO VISIT:

- Manama Souk**—Bahrain's oldest souk with specialty areas for spices, rugs, gold, clothes and souvenirs.
- Gold City**—A modern indoor mall dedicated to jewelry.
- Al Qusayrya Market**—A UNESCO World Heritage Site, famous for its pearl sales.

ATTIRE

When you are off the installation, you will see local men and women in traditional Bahraini attire. Service members may not dress in traditional host nation attire, except those of the Muslim faith or when visiting a mosque.

Local Men:

- Thobe**—a loose, ankle-length robe made from cotton.
- Ghutrah**—a red checkered or white head covering.
- Agal**—a strong cord to hold the Ghutrah in place.

Local Women:

- Abaya**—a traditionally black, but sometimes colorful, ankle-length garment with long sleeves and a high neckline.
- Hijab**—a religious head covering.
- Niqab**—a long garment that covers a woman's entire body and face.

ACCEPTABLE ATTIRE FOR U.S. PERSONNEL AND DEPENDENTS

Base personnel and their dependents should follow the Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) instruction regarding clothing.

Uniforms are not permitted to be worn off base.

Clothing should be neat and conservative.

Approved:

- Ball caps, beanies, visors
- Collared shirts, casual or dress shirts that cover shoulders, midriff and chest
- Sleeves that cover at least three inches from shoulder seam
- Shorts, skirts, dresses worn at or below the knee
- Slacks, jeans, capri pants, leggings past the knee and not frayed or torn
- Dress shoes, sneakers, running shoes
- Flip-flops with leather or cloth straps, or wooden soles
- Always carry your ID card out of sight

Prohibited:

- Cloth head coverings like bandanas and du-rags
- Sheer or see-through items
- Male piercings, more than two female ear piercings per ear
- Undershirts, tank tops, halter tops, tube tops, or any shirt that exposes shoulders, midriff or cleavage
- Items that identify you as an American like military-issued objects, backpacks, command-related wear, etc
- Offensive slogans, graphics or text related to politics, religion, nudity or sex, drugs, alcohol, gangs or other offensive material



HOLIDAYS 2022

January 1: New Year's Day

March 30–April 1: Eid Al Fitr

May 1: Labor Day, May Day

June 6–8: Eid Al Adha

June 26: Islamic New Year, Muharram

July 4–5: Ashura

September 4: The Prophet's Birthday

December 16–17: Bahrain National Day

RAMADAN

February 17–March 20, 2026

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. During Ramadan, Muslims honor the Holy Qur'an being revealed to the Prophet. During this month, Muslims observe a fast from eating, drinking, smoking and other vices from dawn until sunset.

Base personnel are not obligated to fast. However, eating or drinking in public during the day may incur fines or jail time. Please note that many restaurants, parks, stores and services may have different hours. Some five-star hotels still serve food during regular hours.

ARABIC LANGUAGE

Ready to learn Arabic? Here are a few words to get you started.

Welcome Ahlan wa Sahlan/Marhaba
 Good Morning Sabah el khayr
 (Reply) Sabah ennoor
 Good Evening Masa'a el Khayr
 (Reply) Masa'a ennoor
 Hello Assalaamo Alykum
 (Reply) Wa alykum assalaam
 What is your name? Maa Ismak?/Maa Ismik?
 My name is... Ismi...
 Are you American? Inta amreekee?
 Yes Na'am
 Are you Bahraini? Inta Bahraini?
 No Laa
 If God wills Inshallah
 God's willing Mashallah
 Congratulations Mabrook
 Goodbye Ma assalaamah
 (Reply) Fi Aman Allah
 Thank you Shukran
 You're welcome Afwaan
 How are you? Kaif Halak?/Kaif Halik?/
 Kaif halkom?
 Thank God Al hamdulillah

RESOURCES FOR LEARNING ARABIC

Although the basics are great, nothing beats hearing the language spoken well. Make the most of your tour in Bahrain by trying to learn the language.

► FFSC Classes

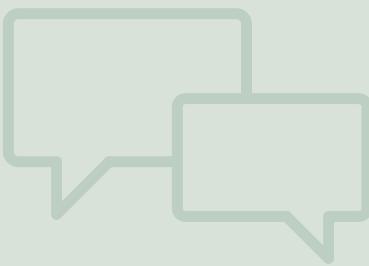
The installation's FFSC provides Arabic classes to get you comfortable being off the installation and having a basic conversation with the locals. In addition, FFSC offers classes in local customs and shopping for carpets and jewelry.

► Library

Through the Navy MWR library websites, you can access Mango Languages courses and the Mango App to learn Arabic for free on your computer or mobile device.

► Google Translate App

This app allows you to type, photograph or say words in one language and quickly translate them into another language. It also offers a real-time dictation function that is convenient for conversations. Keep in mind that Arabic has nuances that affect how accurate Google Translate can be. ■



EXPLORE THE UNIQUE *Muharraq Souk*

Story and Photos by Shannon Renfroe

On historic Muharraq Island, north of Manama, Bahrain, there's a duality to the souk, which blends traditional market life and architectural innovation while underscoring Bahrain's recent architectural revitalization to boost tourism.

The souk entry connects directly to the Pearling Path, a UNESCO World Heritage site that recalls the time when pearl diving dominated the local economy before the discovery of oil. At the heart of the structural revival is Swiss architect Valerio Olgiati's 72,000-square-foot Brutalist concrete structure, which serves as the Pearling Path visitors center. This building, located over the remnants of an amara — a combination of market, factory and warehouse — features geometric cutouts in the ceiling that offer ample shade. Olgiati described it as "an urban room with the scale of a public park," providing a communal space for residents and tourists.

While exploring Muharraq Souk, I saw how restored traditional homes and modern architectural statements seamlessly blend despite their juxtaposition. The market is a labyrinth of alleys, but instead of feeling lost, there is a sense of adventure in deciding whether to turn left or right. The souk still maintains many of its

traditional facades but has been updated with modern construction as part of the country's architectural revitalization efforts.

Expect to be bombarded by shopkeepers calling out, haggling over prices as they hawk goods ranging from gold jewelry to counterfeit Nike items. The place abounds in chaos, which peaks in the evenings, but all that bustle sets the region's markets apart from any other.

Visiting on quieter days allows for more intimate exploration. However, the real treasure lies in engaging with people and gaining a deeper understanding of their crafts and culture.

I was invited into a traditional bakery, where bread was made in a tannour, a time-honored clay oven.

Bahrain hadn't even reached its peak summer temperatures yet, and standing near the heat radiating from the oven gave me a tremendous respect for the baker's work. In a swift movement, he slapped the dough against the inner wall of the tannour, where it sticks, held in place by the intense heat. It took only seconds for the dough to puff up and bubble to a golden brown.

With a hooked metal rod, the baker carefully peeled the bread from the stone wall of the tannour. I was deeply moved by his generosity when he offered me bread without asking for anything in return. Interestingly enough,



Bahrainis make up only 47.8 percent of the island's population while the rest are from other countries, which leads to a rich exchange of cultural practices and perspectives.

The Muharraq souk stands out as more than just a traditional Middle Eastern market. It's an immersive combination of architecture, culture, history and commerce. Make sure you have comfortable walking shoes, and choose your visiting time based on whether you prefer a mob scene or a more intimate experience. You're all but guaranteed to leave with your hands, heart and stomach full.

It was an \$8 taxi ride from NSA Bahrain to the souk in Muharraq. Street parking is available, and the Pearling Path car park is nearby. The market is open daily 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. ■

Discover Bahrain's Heritage at the National Museum

Story and Photo by Shannon Renfroe

The Bahrain National Museum in Manama can be easy to miss when driving down the highway. The exit creeps to the right suddenly, so be wary of the sign.

But the museum, marked by stone sculptures of white travertine placed like chess pieces that lead to the entrance, was well worth the trouble of tracking it down. It offers a captivating journey through time and a multifaceted showcase of the country's story.

One of the museum's most compelling features is its collection that spans over 6,000 years of the history of what is today Bahrain. The exhibits trace the island nation's evolution from ancient civilization to its modern, thriving economic hub. The Dilmun civilization, which flourished around 3,000 B.C., is a focal point of the museum's collection. Known as a center of trade and prosperity, Dilmun is often referenced in ancient Sumerian texts as a land of paradise.

The museum brings this era to life with artifacts such as pottery, seals and tools, providing a tangible connection to the distant past. The re-created burial grounds were a highlight for me, offering a glimpse into the funeral practices of the Dilmun people. Visitors can

explore a section showcasing scenes from early Bahraini civilization during its pre-industrial past. Although some mannequins show signs of wear, the costumes and set designs offer an insightful glimpse into life during simpler times. The museum houses six permanent exhibitions, a library and an art gallery, which showcases rotating artists. All upcoming events and artists are on the museum website at www.culture.gov.bh/en.

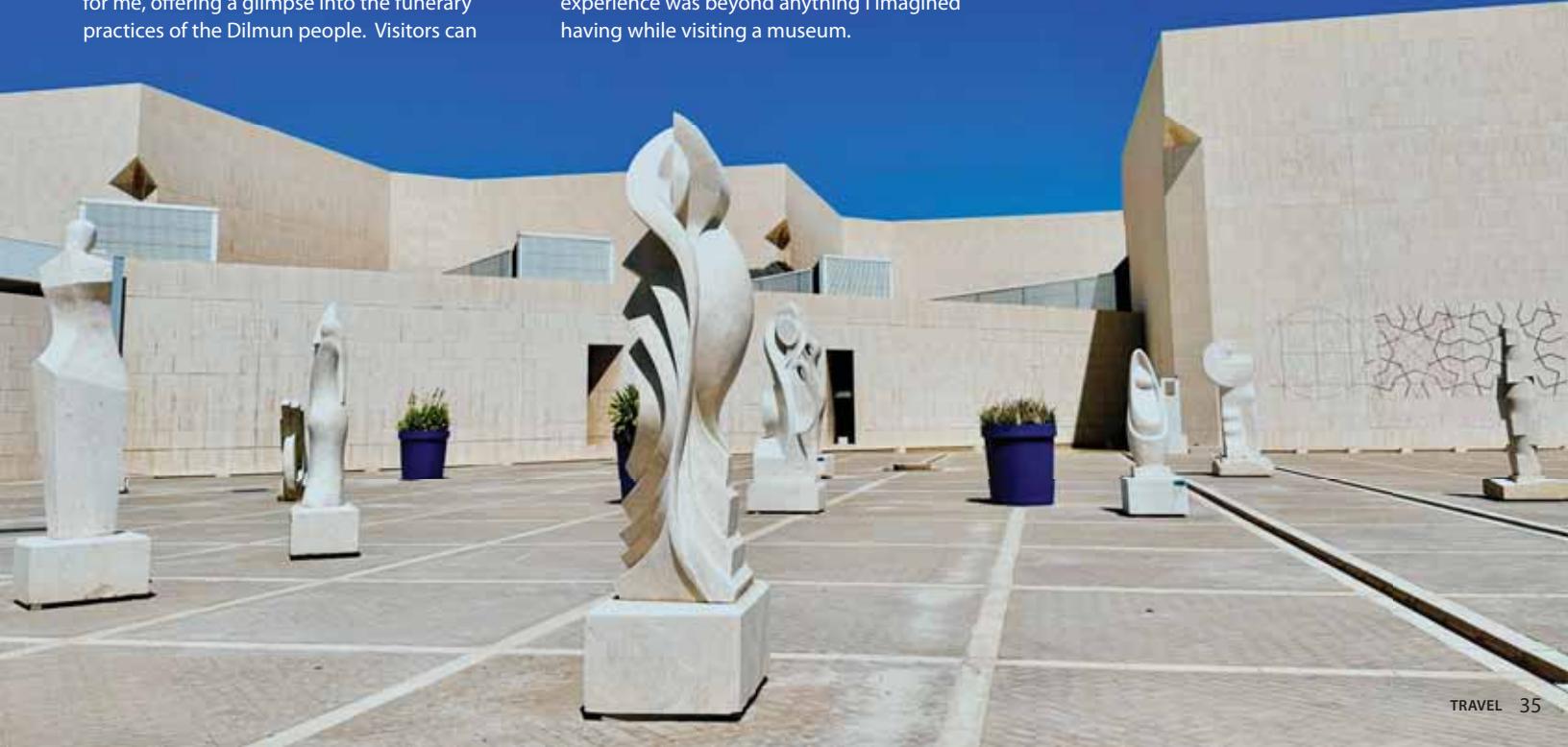
Three of the exhibitions are dedicated to archaeology and the ancient civilization of the Dilmun, while another two depict various cultural scenes and crafts, and the sixth features documents and manuscripts. I enjoyed walking through the Dilmun burial grounds because it felt as though I was in the desert with the excavators, stumbling across the skeletal remains of a civilization that had been hidden for centuries. I looked down at the skeleton of a 45-year old male that lived around 2000-1900 B.C., imagined the life he had and how carefully his community buried him, ritually laying him on his right side.

No one spoke as they walked through this exhibition. There was an air of somberness, but also humility and an appreciation for life. The experience was beyond anything I imagined having while visiting a museum.

On a much lighter note: the cafe is a must. I enjoyed a rose lemonade made from scratch, the perfect refreshment for a hot summer day in Bahrain. The Bahrain National Museum is in a beautiful location along the Manama waterfront because it sits adjacent to the Bahrain National Theater, also an architectural treasure. It offers ample parking, so there is one fewer thing to stress about.

Stepping into the museum was a welcome break from the sweltering summer heat, but it was also an opportunity to quietly venture through a maze of interesting artifacts. There isn't much guidance as to where you should start, other than a large mural of Bahrain that spreads across the entire floor of the museum. Not having maps at every corner eliminated the pressure to fit every exhibition into one visit. It isn't the Smithsonian, but it's impressive nonetheless, and left me with a deeper appreciation for Bahrain and the path it has taken.

The Bahrain National Museum is located in Manama. Tickets are 1.1 BD (about \$3) and it is open every day except Tuesday, 9 a.m to 8 p.m. ■



BAHRAIN'S BEST *Cultural Sites*

By Stripes Staff and Bahrain Tourism and Exhibition Authority

Bahrain might be small in size, but it carries tremendous charm with its history and culture. Bolster your knowledge of this island and discover its wonders at these must-do attractions.



Bab Al Bahrain

BAB AL BAHRAIN

If you're looking to experience the real culture of the island, this is the first place to start. Built in 1949, Bab al Bahrain which translates to "Gateway of Bahrain," is the main entrance to the city's vibrant souk downtown where you will find traditional cafes, restaurants and a wide range of rare spices, fabrics, kaftans, dry fruits, regional unique handicrafts, nuts and more. It's a good place to stock up on souvenirs to send home.

AL JASRA HANDICRAFTS CENTRE

Located in Al Jasra village, Al Jasra Handicrafts Center is considered one of the most important craft centers in the Kingdom of Bahrain and offers a look into the traditional arts and crafts that many of the villages in Bahrain have historically produced. Watch as craftsmen demonstrate pottery making, textile weaving, woodworking, model-boat building, basket weaving and many other crafts. The small workshops where the handicrafts are produced represent an admirable attempt to preserve skills that might otherwise be lost. They overlook a pleasant central garden, and there is also a gift shop where purchases go a little way to helping Bahrain retain some of its traditional handicraft skills.

AL-FATEH MOSQUE (GREAT MOSQUE)

The Al-Fateh Mosque (also known as Al-Fateh Islamic Center & Al Fateh Grand Mosque) is one of the largest mosques in the world, encompassing 6,500 sq. m and having the capacity to accommodate over 7,000 worshippers at a time. The mosque was built by the late Sheikh Isa ibn Salman Al Khalifa in 1987 and was named after Ahmed Al Fateh. In 2006, Al-Fateh became the site of the National Library of Bahrain. Set against a backdrop of palm trees and the sea, the Grand Mosque strikes a beautiful picture. With its exquisite Bahraini architecture, crowned by the world's largest fiberglass dome and blessed with tranquility reserved for the holiest of holy places, the Grand Mosque truly lives up to its name. Though non-Muslim visitors are welcome, it is important to dress modestly, cover your head (for women) and take your shoes off before entering. Another mosque to check out is Khamis Mosque.

BLOCK 338

Located in the heart of Manama, Block 338 is a charming pedestrian quarter crammed with international restaurants, art galleries and boutique shops. Known as Bahrain's hot dining district, Block 338 offers a wide range of restaurants appealing to all ages and tastes, offering a variety of options ranging from a fancy meal to traditional Bahraini food or just a soothing drink. In addition to this distinguished eating experience, Block 338 has a number of good retail opportunities tucked along its side streets and has grown over the years into a vibrant space for art lovers.

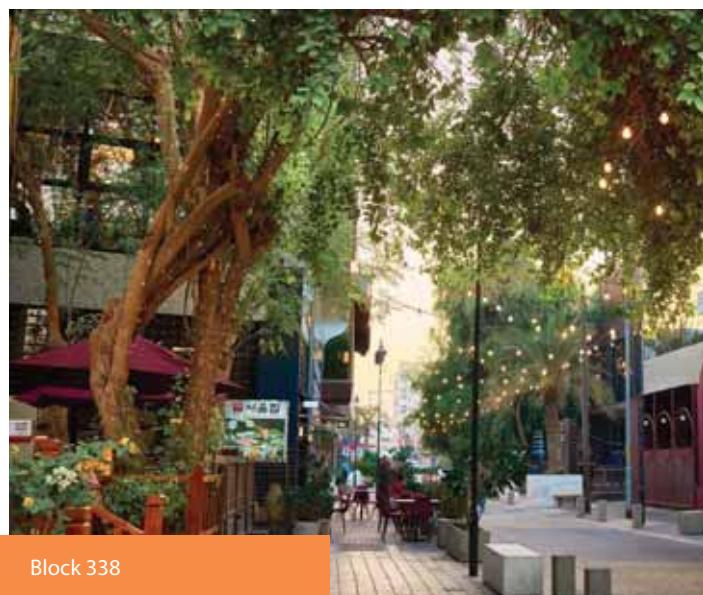
THE PEARLING PATH

Discover the UNESCO-listed Pearling Trail of Bahrain that stretches up to 3.5 km through the old alleyways of Muharraq. Before the oil boom, pearl divers were a big source of economic prosperity in Bahrain. Get to know more about the pearling lifestyle as you visit a local market, Bin Matar House, and the Dhow building yard. There's even a chance to shop for this precious "jewel of the sea" and get one for yourself or a loved one as a souvenir.

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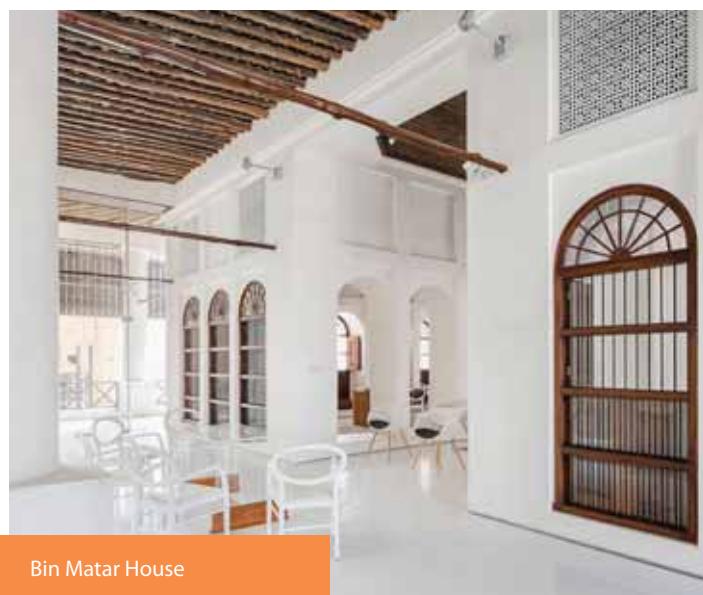


Al Jasra Handicrafts Centre



Block 338

©TOURISMBH / INSTAGRAM



Bin Matar House

©SHAIKHEBRAHIM BIN MOHAMMED AL KHALIFA CENTER FOR CULTURE AND RESEARCH

continued from page 37

QAL'AT AL BAHRAN

Qal'at al Bahrain, also called Bahrain Fort or Portuguese Fort, is perhaps one of the most prolific archeological sites you'll see in Bahrain. Once the capital of the Dilmun civilization, this fort is registered today as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and carries 4,000 years of history between its arches from 2300 B.C. until the 18th century from its various occupants, including Kassites, Greeks and Portuguese. You can walk through different parts of the fort to transport yourself through layers of its historical legacy further highlighted with the use of an audio guide available to visitors. There is also a museum connected to the fort that explains the area's history and contains artifacts from past civilizations. A seaside cafe offers a stunning view of the fort and the surrounding palm groves, with a view of flying kites from the festive beach just steps away with food trucks and various activities, including horse rides. If you like your experience here, make sure to check out Riffa fort and Arad fort as well.



Qal'at Al Bahrain

BOAT TRIPS TO BU MAHER FORT

Bu Maher Fort, which was built in 1840, served as the main fishing harbor and gateway to and from the sea. The Bu Maher Fort Visitor's Center is the starting point to discovering more about the Pearl Path that has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The center contains a three-dimensional display that guides the viewer through the history of the path and the houses that formed it from the early beginnings to the main pearl trading traders. The visitors' center can be accessed via the sea by boats that depart from Bahrain's National Museum harbor.



Bu Maher Fort

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Bahrain is home to numerous archaeological digs around the island starting with the **A'Ali Burial Mounds**, located on the north side of A'Ali. This archeological paradise is considered one of the largest prehistoric cemetery sites in the world with more than 85,000 Dilmun and Tylos burial mounds, dating back about 4,500 years.

Saar Settlement is another gem featuring an entire residential quarter comprising well-preserved courtyard houses, a temple and a very unique honeycomb-shaped cemetery. This third-millennium BC site offers fascinating insights into the daily life of the ancient inhabitants of Bahrain. Lastly, the **Barbar Temples** and **Diraz Temple** are some impressive archaeological discoveries dating back to the second and third millennium B.C. These sites are well worth your time, as they represent some of the earliest examples of the dawn of human civilization. ■



You can also get Bahrain's events at your fingertips at www.calendar.bh



Barbar Temple



**Let your smile be the best part
of your day.**



Prevention is always better than a cure.

While living in Bahrain you do not always have fluoride in your drinking water; your toothpaste is a good source of fluoride.

We recommend you brush your teeth a minimum of 2 times a day and not rinse with water after brushing, this way the fluoride from your toothpaste will stay and help protect your teeth.

If you are staying here for more than 6 months, it is essential that you go for your dental checkups and cleanings.

According to the American Dental Association, you should see your dentist every 6 months.

We highly recommend you do that while living here.

We would love to welcome you to our clinics.

We are open 7 days a week from 9 am to 8 pm.

Welcome to **Bahrain**



Dr. Roger El-Bassit
Oral Surgeon – Implantologist



Dr. Majd Mouawad
Prosthodontist – Advanced Cosmetic Dentistry



Dr. Elias El-Achkar
General Dentist
Restorative & Aesthetic Dentistry



Dr. Patrick Bounassif
Orthodontist



Dr. Donna Hassoun
General Dentist



Dh. Ghadeer Omran
Hygienist



Dr. Carla Moukarzel
Pediatric Dentist



Dr. Marc Bassit
General Dentist



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PEDIATRIC ALLERGY & IMMUNOLOGY
DENTISTRY
PLASTIC SURGERY
NEURO SURGERY
DERMATOLOGY & COSMETOLOGY
NUTRITION AND DIETETICS
IN PATIENT CARE
MATERNITY
INPATIENT WARD
INTENSIVE CARE UNIT
NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT
DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES
MRI
CT SCAN
MAMMOGRAM
ENDOSCOPY & COLONOSCOPY
STRESS ECHO
PULMONARY FUNCTION TEST
AUDIOLOGY
HOLTER MONITORING

X-RAY

ULTRASOUND (4D)
TREADMILL TEST
ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY
SURGERY SERVICES
LAPAROSCOPIC GENERAL SURGERY
ORTHOPAEDIC TRAUMA SURGERY
BLADDER SURGERY
LAPAROSCOPIC GYNECOLOGY SURGERY
JOINT REPLACEMENT
SURGICAL INTERVENTIONS
URETEROSCOPIC SURGERY
PLASTIC SURGERY
NEURO SURGERY
SPINE SURGERY
ENT SURGERY
MATERNITY SURGERY
SPECIALIZED CLINICS
HEMORRHOIDS CLINIC
ARTHRITIS CLINIC
NECK & BACK PAIN CLINIC
HERNIA CLINIC
SPORTS MEDICINE CLINIC
VARICOSE VEINS CLINIC

THYROID CLINIC

BREAST CANCER DETECTION CLINIC

OTHER SERVICES

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ANNUAL MEDICAL CHECK UP
CORPORATE MEDICAL CHECK UP
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OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE
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AMBULANCE ON SITE
RESIDENT DOCTOR ON SITE
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