

Hawa Al Manama festival returns, celebrating Manama’s heritage and culture

A nostalgic journey through Manama Souq

- Festival runs until 15 January 2026
- Largest to date, featuring 200 Bahraini businesses, over 300 retail outlets, and more than 90 curated experiences
- The festival spans multiple iconic locations

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His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa yesterday attended the official launch of the second edition of the Hawa Al Manama festival, one of the flagship events of the Celebrate Bahrain season. Running until 15 January 2026, the festival celebrates the rich heritage of Manama Souq and the cultural heartbeat of the Kingdom’s capital.

HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman highlighted that such



events contribute to sustaining Bahrain’s tourism sector and enhancing its impact across key development areas, in alignment with the vision of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the directives of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

Her Excellency Fatima bint Jaafar Al Sairafi, Minister of Tourism and Chairperson of the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA), said: “The festival features immersive entertainment, retail offerings, and authentic Bahraini hospitality, while supporting the broader tourism strategy to diversify of-

ferings, increase overnight stays, and further position Bahrain as a leading family-friendly destination.”

HE Al Sairafi added that this year’s edition is designed to welcome families from the GCC, Asia, and Europe, offering tailored campaigns and accessible cultural programs for everyone to discover Bahrain’s unique attractions.

Running from 25 December 2025 to 15 January 2026, this year’s edition is the largest to date, featuring 200 Bahraini businesses, over 300 retail outlets, and more than 90 curated experiences, brought to life by over 250 young Bahrainis.

Multiple iconic locations

- The festival spans multiple iconic locations, including:
- Al Khalifa Avenue and the Halwa Museum
 - Batelco Building – offering museums, a cultural library, an escape room, and a laser adventure
 - Al Tawawish Square – with handicrafts, henna art, and carnival games
 - Yateem Complex – featuring a classic cars exhibition and rooftop fine-dining

restaurant

- Al Marsah Square – with a vintage photography museum
- The Oriental Neighborhood – celebrating the souq’s aromatic heritage with galleries, perfume and spice markets, and Eastern cuisine
- Al Fadhel Square – offering modern cuisine options and sports courts
- Darb Al Manama – a restored heritage building with a Bahraini café and distinctive experiences
- The Oriental Hotel – hosting an upscale Italian restaurant

For the first time, visitors can experience classic 3x3 basketball with a nostalgic twist, as Bahraini basketball legends compete at Al Fadhel Square. Set against old Manama’s neighborhoods, these matchups revive the game’s golden era and historic rivalries between clubs such as Muharraq, Manama, Al Ahli, and Al Hala.

Cultural landmarks

- The festival also showcases Manama’s cultural landmarks:
- Al Zaina Complex – revived for retro shopping with classic stores, exhibi-

tions, vintage restaurants, and 1980s–1990s-inspired fashion

- Dar Al Andaleeb – offering antique treasures alongside the timeless songs of Abdel Halim Hafez
- Café Al Set – featuring traditional drinks and the music of Umm Kulthum, set within historic art, cinema, and music spaces

Children can enjoy Um Al Khadhar Wal Leef, an adventure inspired by Bahraini folklore. The Manama Theater, one of the first cinemas in the Arabian Gulf, will screen classic animated films and highlights from cinema’s golden era.

Other attractions include the Kanoo Museum, exploring the city’s cultural and business heritage, and the Manama Post experience, where visitors can write handwritten letters using vintage stamps.

To ensure a smooth experience, over 4,000 parking spaces have been allocated with organised traffic management.

A number of senior officials were also present at the launch, celebrating the festival’s return as a vibrant showcase of Bahrain’s history, culture, and tourism.



Manama Souq has been the commercial heart of Bahrain for centuries, originally serving as a trading hub for pearls, spices, textiles, and gold. Its narrow alleyways and traditional shops reflect the Kingdom’s rich history and have shaped Manama into a vibrant center of culture and commerce.

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Al Dur lights the way for Bahrain’s solar future

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Bahrain has taken a major step towards a sustainable energy future with the official launch of the Al Dur Solar Power Plant. The foundation stone was laid yesterday in a ceremony attended by Shaikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister.

Implemented by the Electricity and Water Authority (EWA), the plant is set to reach a capacity of approximately 100 megawatts upon completion in the third quarter of next year, using 135,000 solar panels.

Shaikh Khalid bin Abdullah said the project reflects the broader development vision of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the directives of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.



He described Al Dur as a milestone in Bahrain’s energy sector, adding that it will not only provide new renewable generation capacity but also support the national target of increasing the share of renewable energy in the country’s energy mix to 20% by 2035, in line with the National Renewable Energy Plan. The Al Dur plant will be connected directly to the national electricity grid, demonstrating Bahrain’s commitment to centralised renewable generation projects ca-

pable of contributing substantial capacity to the system.

Shaikh Khalid also praised private sector participation in distributed solar energy projects, highlighting the collaboration between government and private entities in advancing Bahrain’s renewable energy ambitions.

He expressed gratitude to Kamal bin Ahmed Mohammed, President of EWA, all EWA personnel, and other stakeholders for their role in bringing the project to fruition.