

BAHRAIN

(Edition 2, updated October 2015)

Country name	Bahrain ¹
State title	Kingdom of Bahrain ²
Name of citizen	Bahraini
Official language	Arabic [ar]
Country name in official language	Al Baḥrayn [ar] البحرين
State title in official language	Mamlakat al Baḥrayn [ar] مملكة البحرين
Script	Perso-Arabic
Romanisation System	BGN/PCGN Romanisation System for Arabic 1956
ISO-3166 code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	BH/BHR
Capital (PCGN Recommended name)	Al Manāmah (Manama)
Capital in official language	Al Manāmah [ar] المنامة
Population of country	1,314,562 [including 683,818 non-nationals] ³

Geographical names policy

Geographical names are for the most part found in Arabic and should be taken from official Arabic-script sources and romanised via the BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Arabic⁴. All diacritical marks (see Page 2 for details) should be included where possible. Local pronunciation of places may be subject to dialectal influences (see “Language” below). Names found in Roman-script sometimes reflect a phonetic rendering of the name and therefore may not always match the standard Arabic romanised forms.

Language

Modern Standard Arabic is the official language of Bahrain and its written form is used throughout the country. In terms of everyday spoken communication, almost half of the local population⁵ speaks Baharna, or Bahrani Arabic, the dialect of the *Shia* Bahrani people⁶. The use of this regional dialect is primarily concentrated in the more heavily populated areas of the north, in and around Manama and Al Muḥarraḡ and in some rural Bahrani villages. In addition to Arabic, its vocabulary contains words from *inter alia* English, Farsi and Urdu⁷, and it shares some of the particular grammatical and phonological features of Gulf Arabic which is the second most widely spoken dialect in Bahrain⁸. A large expatriate community has also given rise to the significant use

¹ The name means “the two seas” in Arabic.

² Changed from State of Bahrain in February 2002.

³ Kingdom of Bahrain Central Informatics Organisation, Population 2014 <http://www.data.gov.bh/en/ResourceCenter>
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/320079/Arabic_Romanization.pdf

⁴ 300,000 (1995) according to www.ethnologue.com

⁵ *Shia* Muslims constitute the majority of the population of Bahrain; the ruling family is *Sunni* Muslim.

⁷ Due in part to time spent in India by Bahrani families during the early twentieth century.

⁸ 100,000 (1995) according to www.ethnologue.com

of non-local languages such as English, Hindi, Tamil and Urdu. English is the principal language of commerce and is taught as a compulsory subject in schools.

Inventory of characters used in Romanised Arabic (and their Unicode encodings⁹)

The BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Arabic contains the following letter-diacritic combinations in addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman script:

	Unicode		Unicode		Unicode		Unicode
‘	2018	’	2019	Á	00C1	á	00E1
Ā	0100	ā	0101	Ḍ	1E10	ḍ	1E11
Ḥ	1E28	ḥ	1E29	Ī	012A	ī	012B
Ş	015E	ş	015F	Ṭ	0162	ṭ	0163
Ū	016A	ū	016B	Ț	005A + 0327*	ț	007A + 0327*

* NB the z+cedilla is not available as a single encoding

Administrative structure

Since September 2014¹⁰, Bahrain has been divided into 4 Governorates¹¹ (Arabic: *Muḥāfaẓah/Muḥāfaẓat*) (ADM1s). These are each sub-divided into constituencies. The Governorates are each headed by a Governor and are administered from Manama. The list below reflects the current structure with the recommended spelling of the governorates given in bold.

Al ‘Āṣimah (26°13'N 50°35'E) العاصمة
<i>Full form:</i> Muḥāfaẓat al ‘Āṣimah; محافظة العاصمة
<i>Alternative names:</i> Capital, Al Manamah, Manama, Al Manāmah
<i>Population</i> ¹² : 516,717
<i>Website:</i> http://www.capital.gov.bh/

Al Janūbīyah (26°00'N 50°33'E) الجنوبية
<i>Full form:</i> Al Muḥāfaẓah al Janūbīyah; المحافظة الجنوبية
<i>Alternative names:</i> Southern
<i>Population:</i> 260,556
<i>Website:</i> http://www.southern.gov.bh/

⁹ See www.unicode.org

¹⁰ Decree-Law No. 56 2014 reduced the number of Governorates from 5 to 4. Al Wusṭá (Central) governorate was dissolved and divided among the other governorates.

¹¹ Gulf Daily News story with a map showing the administrative divisions:
<http://archives.gdnonline.com/NewsDetails.aspx?date=04/07/2015&storyid=386389>

¹² Figures taken from Kingdom of Bahrain Central Informatics Organisation, Population 2014:
<http://www.data.gov.bh/en/ResourceCenter>

Al Muḥarraq (26°16'N 50°38'E) المحرق
<i>Full form:</i> Muḥāfazat al Muḥarraq; محافظة المحرق
<i>Alternative names:</i> Muḥarraq, Muḥaraq, El Moharraq, Al- Muḥarrak, Moharek
<i>Population:</i> 221,009
<i>Website:</i> http://muḥarraq.gov.bh/

Ash Shamālīyah (26°10'N 50°29'E) الشمالية
<i>Full form:</i> Al Muḥāfazah ash Shamālīyah; المحافظة الشمالية
<i>Alternative names:</i> Northern, Ash Shimālīyah, Al Shamalia
<i>Population:</i> 316,280
<i>Website:</i> http://www.northern.gov.bh/ ¹³

Other significant locations

PCGN Recommended Name	Arabic Script	Alternative names/spellings	Location	Feature Type
Al Budayyi'	البيديع	Budaia; Budaiya	26°12'47"N 50°27'00"E	Populated place
'Ālī	عالي	A'ali	26°09'43"N 50°30'59"E	Populated place
Al Jasrah	الجزرة	Al Djasra; Jesera	26°09'44"N 50°26'57"E	Populated place
Al Muḥarraq	المحرق	Muḥarraq; Muḥaraq; El Moharraq; Al- Muḥarrak; Moharek	26°15'26"N 50°36'43"E	Populated place
Ar Rifā' al Gharbī	الرفاع الغربي	Rifaa Al Gharbi; West Rifa	26°07'34"N 50°32'29"E	Populated place
Ar Rifā' ash Sharqī	الرفاع الشرقي	Rifaa Ash Sharqi; East Rifa	26°07'26"N 50°34'25"E	Populated place
'Awālī	عوالي	Al Chirabia; Oil City; Bapco; Kirabad	26°05'04"N 50°33'02"E	Populated place
Durrat al Baḥrayn	درة البحرين	Durrat Al Bahrain	25°50'N 50°36'E	Artificial island city and resort
Jabal ad Dukhān	جبل الدخان	Dukhan Hill; Jebel Al-Dukhan; Mountain of Smoke	26°02'20"N 50°32'42"E	Mountain
Jidd Ḥafṣ	جد حفص	Jidhafs	26°13'07"N 50°32'52"E	Populated place
Jisr al Malik Fahd (King Fahd Causeway) ¹⁴	جسر الملك فهد		26°10'57"N 50°20'09"E	Causeway

¹³ Website under construction (October 2015).

¹⁴ Causeway connecting Bahrain and Saudi Arabia; a further causeway is planned to link Bahrain and Qatar.

Juzur Amwāj (Amwaj Islands)	جزر أمواج		26°17'21"N 50°39'50"E	Artificial residential/commercial islands
Juzur Ḥawār (Hawar Islands)*	جزر حوار	Juzur Hawar; Djezira Hawar; Howar; Ḥuwār	25°40'06"N 50°45'56"E	Islands
Madīnat Ḥamad	مدينة حمد	Hamad Town	26°06'55"N 50°30'25"E	Populated place
Madīnat ʿĪsá	مدينة عيسى	Isa Town	26°10'25"N 50°32'52"E	Populated place
Qalālī	قلالي	Galali; Kalālī	26°16'24"N 50°39'01"E	Populated place
Jazīrat ar Rif (Reef Island)	جزيرة الريف	Lulu Island	26°14'41"N 50°33'50"E	Artificial island
Sār	سار	Saar	26°11'39"N 50°28'55"E	Populated place
Sitrah	سترة	Sitra Island; As Sitra; Jazīrat as Sitra; Jazīrat Sitrah	26°09'24"N 50°37'17"E	Island
Sitrah	سترة	Port of Sitrah; Port of Sitra; Sitrah Wharf; Sitrah Anchorage, Sitra Terminal	26°08'40"N 50°38'31"E	Port
Umm an Na'sān	أم النعسان	Umm Nasan Island; Jazīrat Umm an Na'sān	26°08'59"N 50°24'00"E	Island
<i>In Manama:</i>				
Taqāṭu' al Fārūq (Farooq Junction)	تقاطع الفاروق	Previously the Dawwār al Lu'lu'ah ¹⁵ , also known as: Pearl Square; Pearl Monument; Pearl Roundabout; The Roundabout; Maydan al Lu'lu'h	26°13'49"N 50°33'40"E	Road junction
Mīnā' Salmān ¹⁶	ميناء سلمان	Mina Salman Port; Mina Sulman	26°12'01"N 50°36'37"E	Port
Mīnā' Khalīfah Bin Salmān	ميناء خليفة بن سلمان	Kalifah Bin Salman Port	26°11'23"N 50°42'52"E	Port
Qal'at al Baḥrayn ¹⁷	قلعة البحرين	Fort of Bahrain; Qal'at al 'Ajāj; Qal'at al-Bahrain; Portugal Fort	26°13'59"N 50°31'20"E	Ancient site

* The Hawar Islands, previously disputed between Bahrain and Qatar, were the subject of an International Court of Justice ruling in 2001 which awarded almost all of them to Bahrain (Jazīrat Jinān was awarded to Qatar. See "Useful references" on Page 5 for details). Those awarded to Bahrain fall administratively into Al Janūbīyah Governorate.

¹⁵ The Pearl Monument, which stood in the centre of the roundabout, was the site of demonstrations by protesters during the Arab Spring in 2011 and became a symbol of the opposition movement. It was destroyed by the government on March 18 2011 and the junction renamed.

¹⁶ Mīnā' Salmān was the Kingdom's main port until Mīnā' Khalīfah Bin Salmān opened in 2009.

¹⁷ Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2005.

Useful references

US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server: <http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/>
BBC country profile http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/country_profiles/790690.stm
FCO country profile: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/bahrain>
Ethnologue report on languages of Bahrain: <http://www.ethnologue.com/country/BH/languages>
CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ba.html>
Bahrain Wikipedia entries: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahrain>; Wikitravel <http://wikitravel.org/en/Bahrain>
Bahrain Land Survey <http://www.slr.gov.bh/default.aspx>
Bahrain Atlas <http://www.bahrainatlas.gov.bh/eatlas/>
Bahrain Central Informatics Organisation: <http://www.cio.gov.bh/>
Bahrain Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning:
http://websrv.municipality.gov.bh/mun/index_en.jsp
UNESCO: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1192>
Daily News article, Central Governorate dissolved. Accessed 27 April 2015: <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=386389>
Bahrain Directorate of Election and Referendum, Electoral Constituencies 2014:
<http://www.vote.bh/En/Electoral%20Constituency?cms=iQRpheuphYtJ6pyXUGiNqiQQw2RhEtKe>
Citizens for Bahrain website: <http://www.citizensforbahrain.com/index.php/entry/implications-of-redrawn-constituency-borders-in-bahrain>
International Court of Justice ruling on Hawar Islands dispute <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/87/7027.pdf>
Language and linguistic origins in Bahrain: the Bahārah dialect of Arabic By Mahdi Abdalla Al-Tajir, Library of Arabic Linguistics, published by Kegan Paul International Ltd, London, 1982
Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia, John Gordon Lorimer, Calcutta, 1908, Vol. II

Edition 2, updated by PCGN
Tel. 0207 591 3120
www.pcggn.org.uk
October 2015