

# BAHRAIN

|                                   |                                                              |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Country name                      | Bahrain <sup>1</sup>                                         |
| State title                       | Kingdom of Bahrain <sup>2</sup>                              |
| Name of citizen                   | Bahraini                                                     |
| Official language                 | Arabic [ara]                                                 |
| Country name in official language | Al Baḥrayn [ara] البحرين                                     |
| State title in official language  | Mamlakat al Baḥrayn [ara] مملكة البحرين                      |
| Script                            | Perso-Arabic                                                 |
| Romanization System               | <a href="#">BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Arabic 1956</a> |
| 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] <sup>3</sup>     |

## 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 Arabic<sup>4</sup>. 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 population<sup>5</sup> speaks Baharna, or Bahraini Arabic, the dialect of the *Shia* Bahraini people<sup>6</sup>. The use of this regional dialect is primarily concentrated in the more heavily populated areas of the north, in and around Manama and Al Muḥarraq and in some rural Bahraini villages. In addition to Arabic, its vocabulary contains words from *inter alia* English, Farsi and Urdu<sup>7</sup>, and it shares some of the particular grammatical and phonological features of Gulf Arabic which is the second most widely spoken dialect in Bahrain<sup>8</sup>. A

<sup>1</sup> The name means “the two seas” in Arabic.

<sup>2</sup> Changed from State of Bahrain in February 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Kingdom of Bahrain Central Informatics Organisation, Population 2014 <http://www.data.gov.bh/en/ResourceCenter>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/320079/Arabic\\_Romanization.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/320079/Arabic_Romanization.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> 300,000 (1995) according to [www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com)

<sup>6</sup> *Shia* Muslims constitute the majority of the population of Bahrain; the ruling family is *Sunni* Muslim.

<sup>7</sup> Due in part to time spent in India by Bahraini families during the early twentieth century.

<sup>8</sup> 100,000 (1995) according to [www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com)

large expatriate community has also given rise to the significant use 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 romanized Arabic (and their Unicode encodings<sup>9</sup>)**

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

| Romanization<br>(Upper case) | Unicode<br>encoding | Romanization<br>(Lower case) | Unicode<br>encoding |
|------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| ‘                            | 2018 or 02BB        | ’                            | 2019 or 02BC        |
| 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                |
| Ẓ                            | 005A+0327*          | ẓ                            | 007A+0327*          |

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

## **Administrative structure**

Since September 2014<sup>10</sup>, Bahrain has been divided into 4 Governorates<sup>11</sup> (Arabic: *Muḥāfazāh/ Muḥāfazat*) (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.

|                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Al ‘Āṣimah</b> (26°13'N 50°35'E)<br>العاصمة                                      |
| <i>Full form:</i> Muḥāfazat al ‘Āṣimah; محافظة العاصمة                              |
| <i>Alternative names:</i> Capital, Al Manamah, Manama, Al Manāmah                   |
| <i>Population</i> <sup>12</sup> : 516,717                                           |
| <i>Website:</i> <a href="http://www.capital.gov.bh/">http://www.capital.gov.bh/</a> |

<sup>9</sup> See [www.unicode.org](http://www.unicode.org)

<sup>10</sup> 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.

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

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

|                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Al Janūbīyah</b> (26°00'N 50°33'E)<br>الجنوبية                                     |
| <i>Full form:</i> Al Muḥāfazah al Janūbīyah; محافظة الجنوبية                          |
| <i>Alternative names:</i> Southern                                                    |
| <i>Population:</i> 260,556                                                            |
| <i>Website:</i> <a href="http://www.southern.gov.bh/">http://www.southern.gov.bh/</a> |

|                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Al Muḥarraḡ</b> (26°16'N 50°38'E)<br>المحرق                                  |
| <i>Full form:</i> Muḥāfazat al Muḥarraḡ; محافظة المحرق                          |
| <i>Alternative names:</i> Muharraḡ, Muharaḡ, El Moharraḡ, Al- Muḥarrak, Moharek |
| <i>Population:</i> 221,009                                                      |
| <i>Website:</i> <a href="http://muharraq.gov.bh/">http://muharraq.gov.bh/</a>   |

|                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Ash Shamālīyah</b> (26°10'N 50°29'E)<br>الشمالية                                                 |
| <i>Full form:</i> Al Muḥāfazah ash Shamālīyah; محافظة الشمالية                                      |
| <i>Alternative names:</i> Northern, Ash Shimālīyah, Al Shamalia                                     |
| <i>Population:</i> 316,280                                                                          |
| <i>Website:</i> <a href="http://www.northern.gov.bh/">http://www.northern.gov.bh/</a> <sup>13</sup> |

## Other significant locations

| PCGN Recommended Name | Arabic Script | Alternative names/spellings                           | Location                 | Feature Type                      |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Al Budayyi'           | البديع        | Budaia; Budaiya                                       | 26°12'47"N<br>50°27'00"E | Populated place                   |
| 'Ālī                  | عالي          | A'ali                                                 | 26°09'43"N<br>50°30'59"E | Populated place                   |
| Al Jasrah             | الجسرة        | Al Djasra; Jesera                                     | 26°09'44"N<br>50°26'57"E | Populated place                   |
| Al Muḥarraḡ           | المحرق        | Muharraḡ; Muharaḡ; El Moharraḡ; Al- Muḥarrak; Moharek | 26°15'26"N<br>50°36'43"E | Populated place                   |
| Ar Rifā' al Gharbī    | الرفاع الغربي | Rifaa Al Gharbi; West Rifa                            | 26°07'34"N<br>50°32'29"E | Populated place                   |
| Ar Rifā' ash Sharqī   | الرفاع الشرقي | Rifaa Ash Sharqī; East Rifa                           | 26°07'26"N<br>50°34'25"E | Populated place                   |
| 'Awālī                | عوالي         | Al Chirabia; Oil City; Bapco; Kirabad                 | 26°05'04"N<br>50°33'02"E | Populated place                   |
| Durrat al Baḡrayn     | درة البحرين   | Durrat Al Bahrain                                     | 25°50'N<br>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<br>50°32'42"E | Mountain                          |

<sup>13</sup> Website under construction (October 2015).

| PCGN Recommended Name                                    | Arabic Script | Alternative names/spellings                                                                                                                        | Location                 | Feature Type                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Jidd Ḥafṣ                                                | جد حفص        | Jidhafs                                                                                                                                            | 26°13'07"N<br>50°32'52"E | Populated place                               |
| Jisr al Malik Fahd<br>(King Fahd Causeway) <sup>14</sup> | جسر الملك فهد |                                                                                                                                                    | 26°10'57"N<br>50°20'09"E | Causeway                                      |
| Juzur Amwāj<br>(Amwaj Islands)                           | جزر أمواج     |                                                                                                                                                    | 26°17'21"N<br>50°39'50"E | Artificial residential/<br>commercial islands |
| Juzur Ḥawār<br>(Hawar Islands)*                          | جزر حوار      | Juzur Hawar; Djezira Hawar; Howar; Ḥuwār                                                                                                           | 25°40'06"N<br>50°45'56"E | Islands                                       |
| Madīnat Ḥamad                                            | مدينة حمد     | Hamad Town                                                                                                                                         | 26°06'55"N<br>50°30'25"E | Populated place                               |
| Madīnat 'Īsá                                             | مدينة عيسى    | Isa Town                                                                                                                                           | 26°10'25"N<br>50°32'52"E | Populated place                               |
| Qalālī                                                   | قلالي         | Galali; Kalālī                                                                                                                                     | 26°16'24"N<br>50°39'01"E | Populated place                               |
| Jazīrat ar Rīf<br>(Reef Island)                          | جزيرة الريف   | Lulu Island                                                                                                                                        | 26°14'41"N<br>50°33'50"E | Artificial island                             |
| Sār                                                      | سار           | Saar                                                                                                                                               | 26°11'39"N<br>50°28'55"E | Populated place                               |
| Sitrah                                                   | سترة          | Sitra Island; As Sitra; Jazīrat as Sitra; Jazīrat Sitrah                                                                                           | 26°09'24"N<br>50°37'17"E | Island                                        |
| Sitrah                                                   | سترة          | Port of Sitrah; Port of Sitra; Sitrah Wharf; Sitrah Anchorage, Sitra Terminal                                                                      | 26°08'40"N<br>50°38'31"E | Port                                          |
| Umm an Na'sān                                            | أم النعسان    | Umm Nasan Island; Jazīrat Umm an Na'sān                                                                                                            | 26°08'59"N<br>50°24'00"E | Island                                        |
| <i>In Manama:</i>                                        |               |                                                                                                                                                    |                          |                                               |
| Taqāṭu' al Fārūq<br>(Farooq Junction)                    | تقاطع الفاروق | Previously the Dawwār al Lu'lu'ah <sup>15</sup> , also known as: Pearl Square; Pearl Monument; Pearl Roundabout; The Roundabout; Maydan al Lu'lu'h | 26°13'49"N<br>50°33'40"E | Road junction                                 |
| Mīnā' Salmān <sup>16</sup>                               | ميناء سلمان   | Mina Salman Port; Mina Sulman                                                                                                                      | 26°12'01"N<br>50°36'37"E | Port                                          |

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

<sup>15</sup> 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.

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

| PCGN<br>Recommended Name        | Arabic Script           | Alternative<br>names/spellings                                            | Location                 | Feature<br>Type |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Mīnā' Khalīfah Bin<br>Salmān    | ميناء خليفة بن<br>سلمان | Kalifah Bin Salman<br>Port                                                | 26°11'23"N<br>50°42'52"E | Port            |
| Qal'at al Baḥrayn <sup>17</sup> | قلعة البحرين            | Fort of Bahrain; Qal'at<br>al 'Ajāj; Qal'at al-<br>Bahrain; Portugal Fort | 26°13'59"N<br>50°31'20"E | Ancient<br>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 Janūbiyah Governorate.

## **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](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/country_profiles/790690.stm)
- FCDO 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](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=iQRpuephYtJ6pyXUGiNqiQQw2RhEtKe>
- 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 Baḥārnah 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

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<sup>17</sup> Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2005.

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