

ZEKREET FORT

Description

Located close to Dukhan on the west coast of Qatar, the Zekreet area boasts an astonishing landscape with prehistoric sites and remnants of old settlements. One such destination site is the 18th century fort and early date press found on the beach. The fort has a very distinctive layout that allows seeing the two different phases of construction.

Originally, the fort was built as a simple square without towers in each corner. In a second phase of development, towers were added at the outer four corners of the fort. However these towers were never completed. Because they were added at a later date, their shape is incomplete. Actually, only three-quarters of their plans were built.

On the fort's coastal side, the ruins of "madabes" can be found. These rooms were used to produce "debis", which is a traditional date-based food. The rooms have parallel channels 10 cm deep into the floor that are linked together by a perpendicular canal near the entrance that funnels into an underground pot in the corner.

During the process of making "debis", palm fronds were laid on the channels, creating a smooth, flat base. The dates were then put in sacks made of palm leaves and laid on top of each other in piles that could reach two meters high. The weight of the upper sacks often squashed the dates in the lower sacks and their thick juice ran into the channels and eventually into the underground pot.

A complete and very well-preserved room used in the production of "debis" can be visited at House of Sheikh Ghanim bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani in Al-Wakra. Evidence of many more can be found in the Al-Zubarah town.

Planning a visit

We suggest taking a walk on the beautiful sandy beach next to the site and enjoying a swim in the sea. Consider bringing some snacks and refreshments along, as the nearest restaurant is in Dukhan. Please remember not to litter the area and to take any garbage back with you. The site is always open and there is no admission fee.

UTM coordinates N 25° 29' 24.31" E 50° 50' 40"

Directions

Zekreet fort is on the west coast of Qatar, 90 km from Doha. Take the road to Dukhan for 80 km and turn right at the Zekreet junction. Drive through Zekreet, turn left when you reach the limits of the village and drive towards the sea. It is possible to drive from Zekreet village in a standard car, however a four-wheel-drive vehicle would be more comfortable.