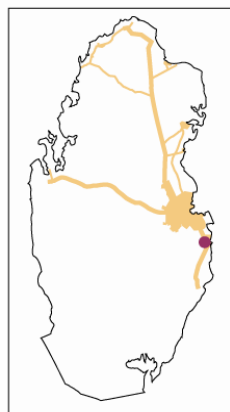


AL-WAKRA FOR FAMILIES

Spend half a day in one of the oldest city of Qatar

Just 13 km south of Doha, Al-Wakra offers two interesting sites: Abu Manaratain mosque and the traditional house of Sheikh Ghanim bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani. Complement your visit with a walk by the harbor full of dhows and a picnic in the playground.



Legend

- Main roads
- Secondary roads
- House
- Mosque
- Fish market
- Playground
- Itinerary

0 100 200 400 Meters

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

2006

To get to Al-Wakra, go to the Doha International Airport and take the road to Mesaieed. When you reach Al-Wakra and the Shells Roundabout, go to the next roundabout and make a U-turn. Take the first wide road on your right called Al-Mathaf, and go straight through the roundabout to reach the harbor. Walk around looking at the “dhows”, traditional fishing boats, that bring the catch to shore early each morning.

Drive back to Al-Seef street and turn left on Al-Baladiya. A huge tree that looms over the building distinguishes Abu Manaratain mosque from all others in Qatar. This mosque was constructed in 1940 and can only be visited externally. In addition to the tree that rests as its close neighbour, it has several other eccentricities. First is its name. “Manaratain” means “two minarets” yet the mosque only has one. This and other clues may indicate that the building had a different shape at some point in its past. A second peculiarity is that the rectangular area where the mosque is built lacks the high walls that are typical of Qatari mosques.

The “mothawaddah”, which is where ablutions take place, is situated in the southern end of the courtyard. It consists of a small pool accessible by a staircase. This pool used to be filled with water from the well in the courtyard. It is at the “mothawaddah” that Muslims perform the “wudu”, which is a long sequence of body cleaning steps completed before entering the mosque for prayer.

The thick walls of the mosque, which helped to isolate the heat and keep the space cool, were built by overlapping raw pieces of coral rock and limestone. The roof was finished with a layer of compressed mud, which helped shield the mosque and those praying from the heat of the sun.

Then, you can drive along the coastline for approximately 100 meters towards the north until you see a traditional white house on your left.

Majid bin Saed Al-Saed, one of the most important pearl merchants in Al-Wakra, built this beautiful and unique house at the beginning of the 20th century. Used to produce “debis” and to sell and store merchandise, the residence was purchased by Sheikh Ghamin bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani in 1960.

Visitors can enter the house 24-hours a day. Just look for the guard, who will be happy to let you in and explore the building on your own. From the outside, you can see the “majlis” on the top floor, reached by a staircase found in the courtyard. It was used by the first owner to receive guests and business partners. The “majlis” rooms were carefully planned to balance the welcoming character of Qataris with the privacy of their family. For this reason, the building has a separate entrance to the “majlis” on the south side that kept visitors from walking through the ground floor and disrupting the privacy of the owner.

Many older residents of Al-Wakra remember when Majid bin Saed Al-Saed fitted the “majlis” with the first radio in town. Often people would gather together in the room and listen to the news.

Moreover, give a look to the very well-restored dates press found in the ground floor. It was used to produce “debis”, traditional dates-based syrup used as dressing for fish and rice.

This house is located within an old district of traditional buildings that Qatari authorities have started to restore. The visit takes approximately 30 minutes.

Afterwards, we suggest going to the wonderful fish market nearby where you can buy different kinds of fresh fish and have them cooked for you in one of the shops.

Enjoy your food by the seaside or in the playground and then explore the mangroves. In spring and autumn, at sunrise and sunset, you may see migratory birds such as “malek al-hazin,” or herons, and flamingos.

For more information on the Abu Manaratain mosque and the House of Sheikh Ghamin bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, download the complete descriptions of those sites and bring them with you.