

A TOUR AROUND THE
WORLD'S GASTRONOMY



KINGDOM OF
BAHRAIN

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A TASTE OF BAHRAIN'S GASTRONOMY



A NATION'S GASTRONOMY IS ITS BEST AMBASSADOR

As an archipelago of islands strategically situated in the Arabian Gulf, Bahrain has occupied historical significance as a vital seaport and trading hub for the surrounding area. Its rich cultural exchanges, shaped by its diverse population, is reflected in the food.

The bounty of the sea features largely in the island's diet. Prior to the oil boom, fishing was widespread; nowadays the local catch supplements the exponential demand, with varieties such as Safi, Chanad and Hamoor being mainstays. Of its agricultural produce,

Bahrain is best known for its lush groves of date palms which not only provide a key food ingredient but represent iconic heritage. A percentage of poultry and dairy products are met by local farmers.

Rice is a staple import, and much of the cuisine draws from neighbouring Arab countries, with notable Persian and Indian influences coming through spice blends and flavour profiles. Hospitality is a major part of the culture where Arabic coffee takes centre stage, accompanied by an assortment of sweets to complement the fragrant, bitter beverage.

TAKE YOUR PALATE ON A TOUR

SPICE UP YOUR LIFE WITH PRODUCTS FROM BAHRAIN



•••• SAFFRON

These precious strands worth their weight in gold are indispensable to Bahraini kitchen. Its floral aroma and signature rich colour is a feature in both sweet and savoury dishes.



•••• BLACK LIME

Made from limes that are brined and sun-dried, black limes offer a bold medley of bitter, smoky citrusy notes, adding mouth-watering depth to choice rice dishes and stews.



•••• CARDAMOM

These versatile pods provide a distinctive, earthy taste that is favoured in cookery as well as beverages such as coffee and tea.



•••• CINNAMON

A rich spice that imparts warmth and complexity to savoury courses, particularly seasoned meat, paired well with other herbs and spices.



•••• CLOVES

Intensely aromatic, the sweet fragrance of these dried flower buds is balanced by an astringent touch, used sparingly to pack a great burst of flavour.

WANT TO BRING SOME BACK HOME?

Access to these spices is convenient as they are ubiquitous. Given Bahrain's small size and urbanised landscape, they are readily available in aisles of most supermarkets. For a more authentic experience, tourists might visit bustling open-air souqs in the heart of Manama, Muharraq or Souq Waqif, which provide a vibrant sensorial experience and a tantalizing variety of spices. Commonly found roasteries also stock top-grade spices, in addition to traditional treats, sweets and pickles.

TOP 5 LOCAL BITES TO SAMPLE



MACHBOOS

Main course. Serving as Bahrain's national dish, Machboos is a well-loved basmati rice dish. The most popular variation is made with chicken, although alternative options are also common. The rice is cooked with meat, a delectable blend of spices, most notably tart black limes, and sprinkled with saffron-infused rose water. The final dish is topped with fried onions and nuts, served with a customary tomato sauce called Daqoos.

SAFI & MUHAMMAR

Main course. The signature sweetness and reddish hue of Muhammad are provided by caramelised sugar or date molasses in which the rice is cooked. This is paired with fish that is marinated and fried to perfection, with a crisp exterior encasing succulent flaky flesh. The combination of rice and fish provides an appetising interplay of sweet and savoury notes.



HAREES

Side dish. Traditionally associated with Ramadan, Eid, and other special occasions, Harees is a hearty, savoury porridge. Wheat grain is slow-cooked with meat of choice (lamb or chicken) and warm aromatics until tender enough to form a smooth, creamy mixture. The addition of clarified butter at the end lends a rich, sumptuous flavour to complete this comforting dish.



BAHRAINI KEBAB

Side dish or snack. Not to be confused with the renowned meat version, Bahraini kebabs are a unique vegetarian treat. Influenced by Indian cuisine, the batter is made with chickpea flour combined with a masala spice mixture, finely chopped tomatoes and onions, and beaten eggs. The batter is then deep fried to form irresistible, crispy, golden patties.



HALWA

Dessert. Flavoured with saffron and rosewater, this traditional sweet has been locally enjoyed for close to a century. The gelatinous mouthfeel is achieved by combining corn-starch water with caramelised sugar, leading to a deep, addictive flavour. Topped with nuts to provide textural contrast and taste, halwa pairs perfectly with steaming, freshly brewed Arabic coffee.



CHEF TALA BASHMI

Tala Bashmi is a Bahrain-born and Swiss-trained chef who was named the winner of The World's 50 Best Restaurants inaugural Middle East & North Africa's Best Female Chef Award 2022. She is often referred to as the voice of modern Khaleeji cuisine, on a mission to bridge the gap between food and gastronomy by modernizing its culinary scene. More recently, Bashmi took home the 'Rising Star' award at The Best Chef Awards gala held in Mexico 2023, while being ranked at #63 globally. Bashmi is currently the Chef Patronne of Fusions by Tala at Manama's iconic five-star Gulf Hotel Bahrain. Her restaurant has been on MENA'S World's 50 Best Restaurants list for 3 consecutive years, currently ranked the #9 Best Restaurant in the region.

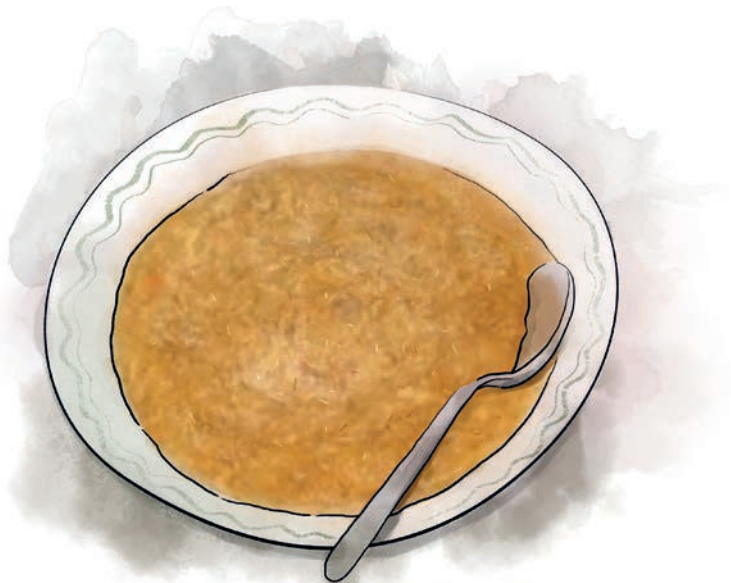


“Cooking is a way to connect people from diverse backgrounds and cultures, my ultimate goal is to bring people together through food and showcase the rich history and bounty of Arabic culture and cuisine.”

Chef Bashmi's inspiration comes from many places—the local markets, art, literature, and even ancient Arabic manuscripts—to transform traditional dishes into modern creations while still capturing the essence and flavors of the original form. Most of the dishes on her menu are created from a specific memory of a tradition by using modern techniques and conceptual reimagination.

Bashmi's commitment to sustainability is also evident in her cooking, as she sources local and seasonal ingredients and reduces food waste by using as many parts of the ingredient as possible.

MATHROOBA



INGREDIENTS

For the rice:

- 1 tomato (390g)
- 240g of tomato paste
- 1 diced onion (210 gr)
- 600g of Basmati rice
- 120g ginger an garlic paste

- 12g turmeric powder
- 9g coriander powder
- 9g salt
- 3g Kashmiri chilli

For the chicken:

- 1 whole chicken (approximately 2.4kg)
- 12g coriander seeds
- 9g black pepper
- 6g bay leaves
- 1 black lime (approximately 27g)

To serve:

- 15 gr fresh coriander
- 15 gr fresh dill

STEP BY STEP

1 Sauté all the ingredients, except the Basmati rice, with the spices.

2 Put all the whole spices in a cheesecloth and drop into the water with the chicken to make the stock that you'll be using to cook the rice.

3 Once the stock is ready, add in the Basmati rice and stir in your herbs. Meanwhile pull the chicken meat apart.

4 To finish add 7.5g (combined) of dill and coriander.

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