

DISCOVER

the
beauty
of
Basra



VISIT
BASRA

2025

first edition

Basra:
A
Pocket
Guide

Welcome!

BY Fasila Agency
25 March 2025

TO Basra, where the palm trees meet and overlook Shatt al-Arab, We've charted the road map so you can discover the true heart of the city. Through this guide, you'll find everything you need to know. We'll be by your side to make your time enjoyable. and fill your visit with experiences. Everything you need is here—from essential contacts to key locations That will make your journey easier. Your experience becomes real when you know where to go, and the first step begins towards Basra.

Founded in 636 AD, Basra has been the commercial and cultural gateway to the south throughout history. Known for its scholars and literary figures like Al-Khalil Al-Farahidi and Al-Sayyab, Basra has witnessed countless historic events. Thanks to its strategic location, it remains a beacon, a vital port, and a rich tapestry of civilization and trade.





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→ HERE'S SOME USEFUL INFORMATION

What to wear?

The People Of Basra Are Known

For

their distinct southern attire that reflects their deep-rooted heritage. Men typically wear white dishdashas in the summer and they opt for darker shades in the winter, paired with a ghutra and egal, especially in rural areas. Women are often seen in black abayas accompanied by a head cover known as a shaila. That southern style embodies both simplicity and elegance.

As

a visitor, you are not obligated to adhere strictly to the local dress code, but it's recommended that you wear clothing that aligns with the local culture and suits the environment. For instance, modest attire is advised in religious places like mosques and churches. Generally, Basra's everyday clothing doesn't differ significantly from global fashion trends.

Emergency Numbers and Key Locations

Before starting your journey in Basra, make sure you have these essential numbers and locations handy

01

Emergency

- Civil Defense:
115
- Ambulance:
122
- Police: 104

02

Hospitals

- Al-Moussawi
- Al-Hayat
- Al-Farahidi
- Al-Sadr Teaching
Hospital
- Al-Sayyab

03

ATM Locations

- Al-Ma'qal
- Al-Jubaila
- Manawi
Basha
- Al-Jazaer
street



About Basra

Here are some
useful Arabic
words you can
use

Al-salamu alaykum = Peace be upon you (a common greeting)

Wa alaykum Al-salam = And peace be upon you (response to
the greeting)

Shukran = Thank you

Afwan = You're welcome / Excuse me

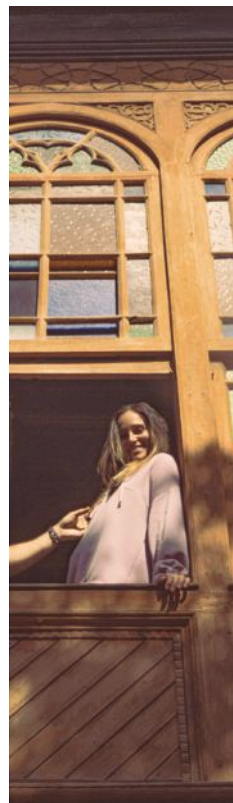
Na'am = Yes

La = No

Min fadlik = Please

Kayfa halak? = How are you

Bikhayr, alhamdulillah = Fine, thank God



Amid

the ancient alleys of Basra, we welcome you to the city of Sinbad and the legend of the marshlands, where nature meets civilization.

Continue reading for details on what to do in Basra, whether traveling solo or with your family. But first, here's a glimpse of our language

The official and Main language of Basra is Arabic. Due to its geographical nature, English serves as a secondary language, spoken by some residents

Transpo

08

Vi

rtation

In the past, transportation in Basra relied on river ferries, wooden buses, and the iconic Waz vehicles in Al-Zubair district. Today, transportation has evolved to become more accessible and varied

sit Basra

Getting Around

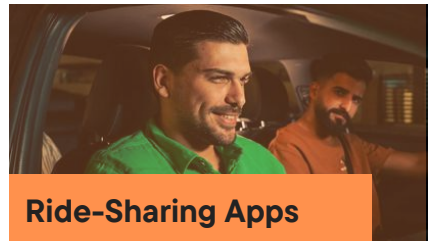
Helpful Tips For Getting Around In Basra



From the Airport, You can rent a taxi to reach your next destination



opt for local taxis, known as "**Abriya**", a popular and budget-friendly choice for most residents. the base fare is (about **US \$0.50-1**)



Preorder a car through apps such as **Careem, Baly**. Each service averages about (**US\$5**)



Where to Stay ?

Find Your Perfect Home Away from Home

Al-Istiqal Street – A Smart Choice for Budget Travelers

Basra offers many affordable hotels, especially along Al-Istiqal Street.

It's a great option for travelers seeking comfort near markets, restaurants, and public transport.



Grand Millennium Hotel

Located in Al-Tayaran Square

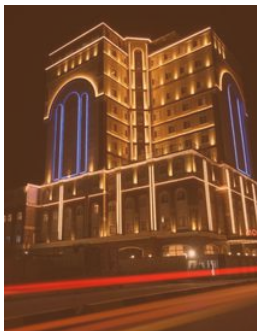
\$150.0 / night



Horizon Hotel

Located on Al-Saadi Street

\$75.00 / night



Movenpick Hotel

Located in on Al-Baradhiah

\$100.0 / night

Food in Basra is deeply rooted, delicious, and rich in flavor, especially in popular and heritage places. There is something to suit every appetite during your visit, whether you crave traditional foods and drinks such as masmouta, kebab, biryani, dolma, tea, and Arabic coffee, or other international and traditional dishes.

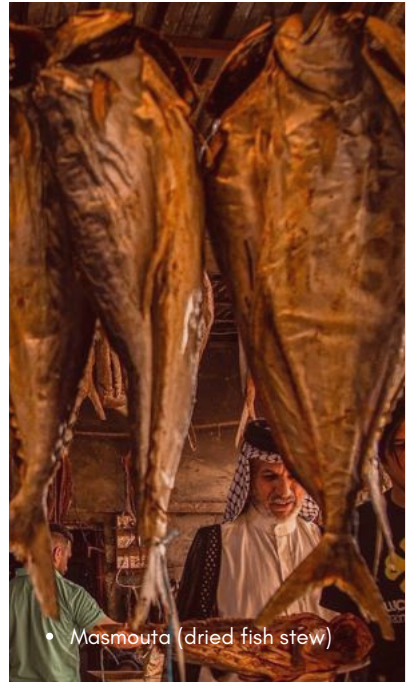
Culture Food & Drinks





Get A Taste of Basra

For a unique and unforgettable Basrawi culinary experience, be sure to try these local specialties



- Masmouta (dried fish stew)



- Halawat Nahr Khuz



- Dates

HALAWAT NAHR KHAWZ – A TRUE BASRAWI FLAVOR

A traditional sweet with a soft texture and rich taste, made from simple ingredients. For the authentic version, buy it from its origin place, Abu Al-Khasib.

Where to Savor This Experience?

Popular Spots

- Sambusa Abu Abbas
- Kebab Abu Mohammed
- Kubba Abu Sabah
- Kebab Minkash

Heritage Locations

- Shanasheel Basra Museum
- Shatt Al-Arab Restaurant

Modern spots

- Naranj
- Bayt Al-Kul
- Barbecue Al-Manqal
- Zarzoor

Tip: If you prefer to enjoy Basrawi cuisine from the comfort of your room, try (Basratna Kitchen), which specializes in authentic homemade-style Iraqi dishes.





Tea And Culture

Tea quickly became a popular drink, especially in the coffee shops that spread in Baghdad and other cities, where it became part of daily life and social gatherings. At first, tea was imported in limited quantities, but it soon became a staple commodity, and Iraqis began to prefer strong black tea mixed with cardamom or sugar.

Over time, tea preparation methods in Iraq evolved, and it began to be served in small cups, and its association with hospitality and social traditions increased. Today, tea remains an essential part of Iraqi culture, and is drunk in homes and coffee shops as a symbol of generosity and daily comfort.

Tea in basra has a long history linked to the social and commercial transformations in the region. Tea began to enter basra during the nineteenth century through the trade routes between India and Britain, where British merchants brought it to Basra and from there it spread throughout the country.

Where to Enjoy it?

Tea: A symbol of Basrian generosity, it's an invitation to chat and a companion for simple moments from morning until evening.

Noomi Basra (dried lime drink): A beloved beverage and a hallmark of Basrian hospitality.

Heritage spots



- Al-Hassoun Museum
- Asha'iri

Popular Spots



- Al-udabaa Café
- Ice Cream Abu Shaeer

Modern spots



- Basora Café
- Espresso Lab
- Locus Café
- Blend House
- Espresso AL-italia

Visit Basra

ACTI

Visit Basra



VITIES

H A S S A N A T H E E

Outdoor

Outdoor Activities

While Basra may conjure up images of an exciting metropolis full of museums, restaurants and galleries, its great outdoors are equally exciting and even more breathtaking.

TRAVEL TIP: No trip to Basra is complete

without experiencing the breathtaking Mount Sanam. If you're an adventurer, the sand dunes of Mount Sanam offer sandboarding, dune bashing, and other adventures. Prefer a more traditional atmosphere? Try a kashtah, an authentic Arabian camping experience that invites travelers to sleep among the sand dunes under the stars. An added bonus: many kashtah experiences also offer traditional food and drinks to try.



OUTDOOR

Activities

Corniche AL-Basra:

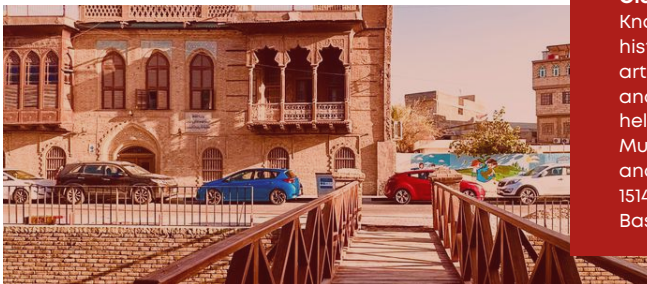
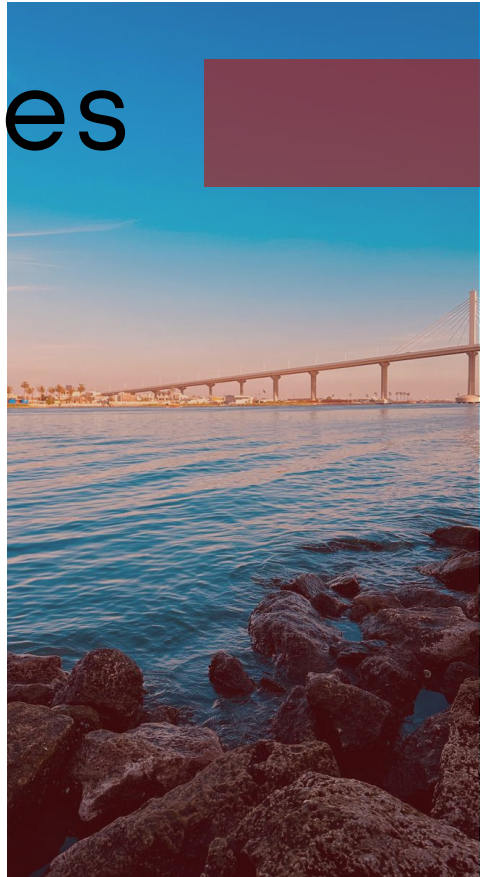
Not just a riverbank, but a perfect tourist destination where you can enjoy Basra's ambiance by taking a boat ride along the Shatt al-Arab.

Al-Ashar:

The historical commercial center of Basra, Al-Ashar is home to old markets like Souk Al-Maghayez, Souk Hanna Al-Sheikh, and Souk Al-Attarine. Don't miss visiting Al-Maqam Mosque, built in 1754, near Souk Al-Maghayez, or the Sacred Heart Church, renowned for its stunning architecture and historical significance, symbolising the city's religious and cultural diversity.

Faraheedi Street:

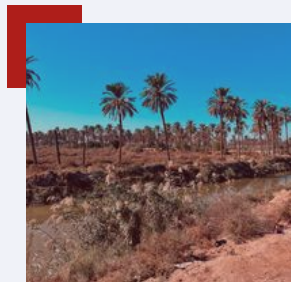
One of Basra's main streets, this vibrant hub connects several city districts and is a focal point for cultural activity, giving it a dynamic and lively character.



Old Basra:

Known for its shanasheel and historic mansions, where often art exhibitions, poetry nights, and musical evenings are held. Visit the Al-Hassoun Museum for cultural artifacts and Al-Kawaz Mosque, built in 1514. To further enrich the old Basra experience.

Enjoy an unforgettable outdoor experience



Abu Al-Khasib:

A Stroll Through Abu Al-Khasib

Discover narrow alleys, palm groves, and water canals. visit farms and enjoy Basrawi dishes like: Masmouta, grilled Zubaidi, and Halawat Nahr Khawz. Half a day is recommended to fully enjoy the experience.

Al-Zubair:

Explore Al-Zubair by riding its iconic Waz vehicles. Visit the historic Khatwat Imam Ali Mosque, a remarkable architectural and spiritual landmark with intricate Islamic designs.

Al-Siba:

Established in 1921, this area in Abu Al-Khasib district is a popular destination for families and youth, offering scenic views of Shatt al-Arab.

Adam's Tree:

Located in Al-Qurna, where the Tigris and Euphrates meet, this ancient tree is surrounded by rivers, creating a mesmerizing scene and serving as a living testament to Iraq's deep history.

Al-Faw:

The best time to visit Al-Faw is in the morning. Stop by the Nakaa Market, Iraq's largest fish market, and head to Ras Al-Bisha, the southernmost point of Iraq, for the breathtaking sea views.



Mount Sanam

The only mountain in Basra, standing tall amid flat lands, offers an unforgettable experience. Whether you're seeking a different atmosphere, camping, or enjoying quality time with family and friends, it's the perfect spot in Safwan.

Visit Basra



MORE OUTDOOR ACTIVATES

Basra Stadiums:

Visit Jathaa Al-Nakhla Stadium, a masterpiece of modern architecture that hosts international matches, or Al-Mina Stadium for another memorable experience.

INDOOR

**BELIEVE IN
THE MAGIC
OF INDOOR
ACTIVITIES**



Basra Museum

The Basra Museum is located in the southern Iraqi city of Basra, housed in a former palace of Saddam Hussein. It officially opened in 2016 and serves as a key cultural institution in southern Iraq. The museum showcases Iraq's rich heritage, with artifacts spanning the Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian, and Islamic periods. It aims to reconnect the public with the ancient civilizations that once flourished in Mesopotamia. The building's architecture blends classical and local design elements, giving a grand and solemn atmosphere. The museum is divided into multiple halls, including sections for archaeology, Islamic history, and modern heritage. Many of the displayed artifacts were recovered or returned after being looted during the 2003 Iraq War. It plays an important educational role for students, researchers, and tourists alike. The Basra Museum contributes to Iraq's post-war cultural revival and preservation of identity. It stands today as a symbol of resilience, knowledge, and pride in Iraqi history.



Indoor Activities.



Art and Entertainment

- Art Space: A venue for pottery making, glass painting and other creative arts.
- Bowling Center: A mix of entertainment and nature with views of the Shatt al-Arab, a cinema hall, and a restaurant.
- Cinema Club: Attend film screenings at Basra's Shanasheel.

Basra's cultural scene is evolving, and nowhere is this more apparent than in its soul, where a thriving arts scene is bubbling below the surface and beginning to take hold. Basra is home to some of the best galleries and a wealth of heritage sites that are a testimony to its rich and beguiling history. Whether you're seeking contemporary art or traditional markets and museums, get your fix with this shortlist.

Basra Civilization Museum:

Located in the presidential palace by Shatt al-Arab, this museum houses 440 artifacts reflecting Iraq's ancient history, with some dating back to 300 BC.

Wax Museum:

Explore the Wax Museum for Iraqi Heritage at the Manuscript Center at Old Basra's Shanasheel.

Saint Mary's Church:

Built in 1736 by the Armenian Orthodox, this historic church lies in the heart of Al-Seemer's Shanasheel district.

Libraries:

- Basra Central Library: Established in 1964.
- Al-Abbasi Library: Founded in the 10th century AH.
- Al-Basha Ayan Library: A gem of Old Basra.

Must-Read About Basra:

- Basrayatha by Mohammed Khudair
- Abu Al-Khasib by Talib Abdul Aziz
- City of Images by Luay Hamza Abbas
- Basra Encyclopedia by Ahmed Basha Ayan

Tip: Don't miss attending a live performance by Al-Khashaba Band for an authentic Basrawi experience at the Artists' Café near the Lion of Babylon on Al-Watan Street.

SHOPPING

Your visit to Basra won't be complete without taking a piece of it home. Whether it's the city's famous dates, handcrafted items that echo its rich history, or snapshots that capture your moments amidst its lively atmosphere, Basra offers treasures for everyone.

Al-Ashar Market:

The city's oldest and most famous market, is still as vibrant and active as it was when it first emerged in the late 19th century.



The market offers everything from gold jewelry to distinctive handicrafts and antiques, including traditional Basrawi items such as Arab clothing, incense burners, dates, spices, and more. The Al-Ashar area is one of the districts of the city of Basra in southern Iraq, which is considered the center of Basra today. What distinguishes it is its diversity in terms of shops, cafes, restaurants, schools, and the variety of markets there.



IN BASRA

It was named Al-Ashar because it was the area where a tenth was taken from the price of imported or exported goods as a tax, customs duties, or for the use of its port during the Ottoman era. This is the name given to its river, the Al-Ashar River, which divides it into two parts. The Al-Ashar area is currently considered the commercial center of Basra due to the abundance of commercial markets there. This city has acquired a special beauty due to its location on the banks of the Shatt al-Arab and its passage through the Al-Ashar River and the Khandaq.

The beginning of the prosperity period of Al-Ashar was during the reign of Nasser Pasha Al-Saadoun, when trade flourished in Al-Ashar and companies opened their offices there.



Most of the government and administrative buildings are located there, extending from (Kuwait Street) and (Umm Al-Broom) Square to the (Khandaq River), the old governorate building, and (Al-Salihiya). From the (Al-Ashar River) to (Saudi neighborhood) and (Al-Azizah area).



visit basra

Basra Times Square:

The perfect destination for a fun outing with family and friends. Enjoy a seamless shopping experience featuring both local and international brands in a vibrant space that combines entertainment and retail. Located on Dinar Street.

Shanshal Mall:

Another popular shopping and leisure spot in Aljazaer Street offers a variety of local and international stores to meet all your needs.

Basra Mall:

One of the largest malls in Iraq, Basra Mall features an extensive array of local and global brands, indoor gardens, and dining options. Located on Al-Wafoud Street.

Piano Mall:

Situated in Al-Ashar near the Corniche of Shatt al-Arab, this new shopping destination in Basra offers a modern shopping experience.

WHERE TO SHOP?



SHOPPING IN BASRA



FRIDAY MARKET IN OLD BASRA:

Unlike modern commercial centers, the Friday Market is defined by its affordable prices, traditional atmosphere, and a variety of aromas wafting from its diverse products. Here, you'll find fresh dates, herbs, spices, traditional clothing, and handcrafted goods that Basra is famous for.



BASRA MARKET:

Take home a piece of Basra's history with its fragrant spices. Visitors can find unique flavors that reflect the city's traditions and add a special touch to their kitchens.

visit basra

For
an
Unforgettable
Journey
in
Basra

We've reached the end of the journey, but every end is a new beginning. Basra is very happy to have met you and has left you, your family, and your children with one last thing on the other side. Enjoy your time.

Notes and Checklist

Take Note!

Use this page to take notes and to check-off some of the must-see spots you just read about.

YOUR BASRA CHECKLIST

- Walked along the **Corniche**
- Savored the renowned **Basra dates**
- Visited the historic **Shanasheel**
- Enjoyed **Masgouf fish**
- Took a river cruise on **Shatt al-Arab**
- Drink traditional **Iraqi tea**

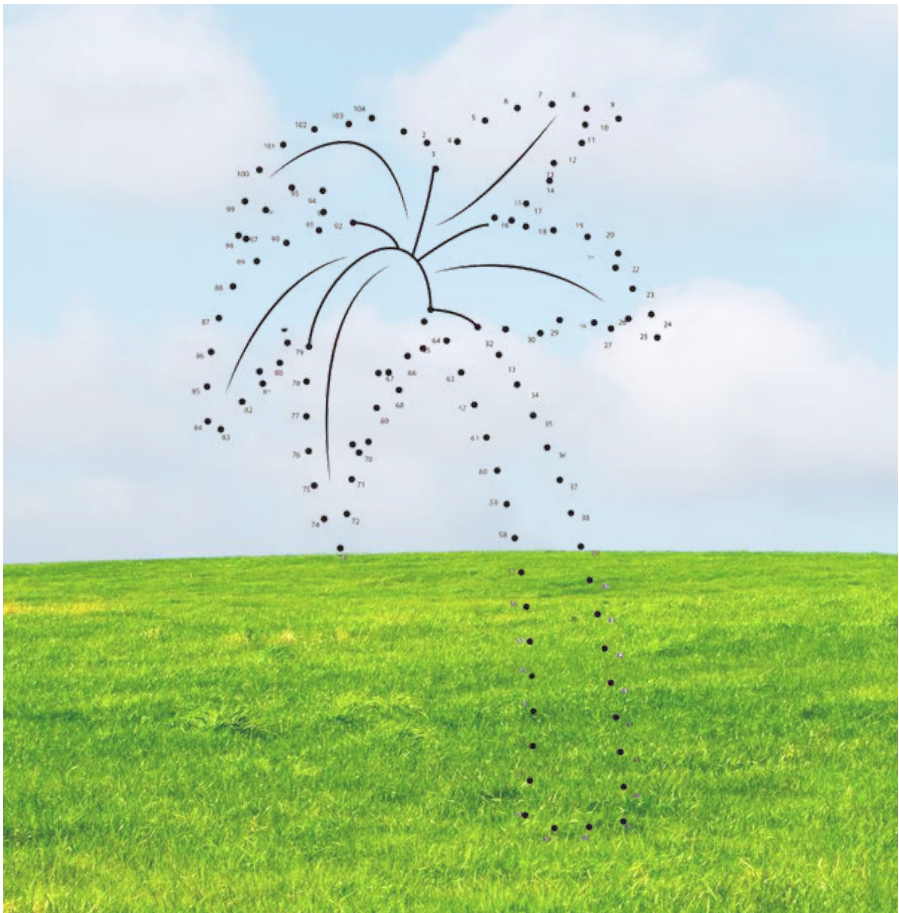
- Tasted the unique **Halawa of Nahr Khuz**
- Explored **Old Basra**
- Reached **Ras al-Bisha** in Al-Faw
- Camped at **Jabal Sanam**
- Attended a live performance by the **Khashaba Band**

For Your Child

Let your little one complete their Basra adventure with this fun activity!

Join the dots to draw a palm tree.

Once the drawing is complete, look at the bottom of the page for a fun fact.



Fun Fact:

Basra is famous for palm cultivation, as the number of palm trees in Basra is estimated at more than 2.4 million palm trees, and the number of types of dates in Basra is more than 650 varieties.

SEE

YOU

AGAIN



VISIT
BISRA