



SHARJAH MARITIME MUSEUM

Pre and Post Visit Materials

Sharjah Maritime Museum sheds lights on marine life which formed a major part of Sharjah's heritage. The sea played a key role in the development of the coastal cities over 6,000 years ago.

You can explore traditional wooden seafaring dhows used for fishing, trading and pearling, each designed according to their use. You will get the opportunity to contemplate the beauty of the genuine Arabian pearls collected by our ancestors from the deep blue waters of the Gulf.



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| The Crew | The total number of divers on each boat was around 10 to 60 depending on the boat size and their mission. The whole crew members collaborates together to success the diving journey. |
| <i>Al Nukhada</i> | A captain, <i>Nukhada</i> was the absolute master of his boat and all boat affairs go back to him. |
| <i>Al Ghawas</i> | Dives to the deep water to search for pearl oysters. |
| <i>Al Tawash (Pearls Merchant)</i> | A local name for the pearl merchant. There are two types of <i>Al Tawwash</i> ; one of them who travels and wanders between boats during the journey to sell and buy pearls. While the other one who buys and sells pearl on the land. Pearl merchant may not be educated but they should be experts in weighing pearls. <i>Al Tawwash</i> should take his measuring tools wherever he goes. |
| <i>Al Tabakh (cooker)</i> | One of the crew team whose main job was to cook and make coffee and tea for the crew. In some boats there are cooking assistants. |
| <i>Al Siyib (The Haulers)</i> | One of the crew team whose main job was to equip the rope for the diver and pull him out of the water. This is done when the hauler gets a sign from the diver. |
| <i>Al Mjadami (A boatswain)</i> | The crew leader, nominated by the <i>Nukhada</i> , whose main job was to supervise and organize the work on board. Also he is responsible for the food, water and tools for the pearl diving journey. |
| <i>Al Nahham:</i> | A singer who raised the morale of the divers by chanting and drumming. Also he helps in some works on the boat if needed. |
| <i>Al Tawwash Tools</i> | |
| <i>Al Maghrafa</i> | A small ladle made of copper or silver metal to lift out pearls. |

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| <i>Al Bishtakhta</i> | A small wooden box, used by <i>Al Tawash</i> to preserve his measurement scales, pearls and diving records. |
| <i>Diving Records</i> | A book, used by <i>Al Tawwash</i> , to write down pearls' standards and weights. |
| <i>Al Towas</i> | Metal pot with many holes and different diameters, used to winnow the pearls in order to classify the pearls according to their sizes. |
| <i>Al Makhamal</i> | A piece of blue or red velvet fabric used to preserve pearls. |
| <i>Al Mezan (Scales)</i> | An easy-moving weighting scale made of copper lamina with silky thread to measure pearls. It has two plates; one for the weight and the other one for the pearl. Weighting process is done inside an isolated room to avoid air current during measuring. |
| Diving Seasons | Diving was the most essential job of the economic life in the Arabian Gulf before discovering oil. It was seasonal profession where groups of divers dove to extract pearls from the bottom of the sea. The income they received helped to obtain their necessary needs of life. The diving voyage varied according to seasons of the year. |
| <i>Al Qahha</i> | A daily diving voyage to the coastal diving areas during the winter season with a little number of divers. The divers dove in shifts because of the extreme coldness. |
| <i>Al Hirat</i> | An area in the sea full of pearl oysters. |
| <i>Al Oud</i> | A major diving season that took place in the summer for four months from May till September. It's considered to be the difficult season as it required a big effort during the extreme heat. Diving started from early morning until the oysters terminate in <i>Al-Hair area</i> . |
| <i>Al Riddah</i> | A voyage with a little number of divers in the autumn season for two to three weeks. The size of the boat was varied between small to medium. |

Diving Tools

Al Dayyin A basket from thick yarns used for collecting oysters and it was carried around the neck of the diver.

Al Futam A diver's nose clip made from turtle shells or goat bones used to prevent water from entering inside the nose.

Al Khubt A set of finger covers made of cow skin, worn by divers to protect their fingers from injuries while collecting oysters.

Al Miflaqa Knives used for shucking oysters.

Hesat Al Ghous A stone used to help the diver descend quickly. The stone approximately weighs 4 kg and would have been looped around the diver's foot.

Diver wear A shirt and a trouser made of light fabric used to protect diver's body from jellyfish stings.

Traditional Boats Many of the traditional boats came in different sizes to serve different purposes. For example, small boats were used for fishing while bigger sized were used for diving and trading.

Al Badan AL *Badan* boat was the most unusual the smaller sizes of this double-ended boat were used for coastal fishing. The larger ones, sometimes with two sails, traded as far as Africa. Typically, Al *Badan* had a long, slim hull with a sharp needle-nose stem and high upswept stem post. Both stem post and stern post were stitched to the planking. This technique was a survivor of sewn-plank construction from the ancient world.

Al Baghlah It was one of the most common boats used in the Gulf region. It was used for transporting and diving journey. The large size had a copper base, three sailing masts and a rear with a wide and high surface with decorated patterns. The front side of the boat was curved and specified by a wooden globe.

- Al Baqqara*** *Al Baqqara* was a double-ended vessel with a sharper, pointed bow and single flat upright stern post. Varying in length from forty to one hundred feet, *Al Baqqara* carried two masts and was sometimes guided by a rope steering system. They were mainly used for fishing and transporting cargo around the coasts of the Emirates.
- Al Boom*** Is distinguished by its straight prow, angle of 45, and frequently used in the Arabian Gulf area. Its edge was painted with simple lines in black and white colour to give an illusion of the eye shape which was drawn on many boats in the past.
- Al Jalboot*** A local boat used for many purposes such as diving, trading, fishing and transporting. This was considered to be the most well-known boat in Bahrain.
- Al Sama'a*** A boat used for pearl diving, trading and transporting. This was considered an original boat designed locally in the UAE. It's similar to the *Sambuq* but with a difference in the front shape of the boat.
- Al Shahoof*** A small boat used for fishing and move across the water and beaches nearby.
- Al Shu'ai*** A bout used for pear diving, traveling and fishing. It is similar to Al *Sambuq* boat but with a unique front head shape.
- Sambuq*** *Al Sambuq* was one of the earliest Arab sailing crafts, with origins that could be traced back into antiquity. A multi-purpose boat was used for pearling, fishing, lightering and depending on its size, for carrying cargoes of all types. It's fairly low, curved stem design rose to a high, square stern, making it easy to row out to the pearling banks. The great Arab explorer Ibn Battuta describes seeing *Sambuqs* throughout the Arab world during, his voyages in the 8th century AH/ 14th century AD.

Fishing and Fishing Tools

The gulf sea is rich with different kinds of fish which many citizen depends on, as it became the main alimentary source in their life system. The fishermen use various types of elements on fishing such as nets, steel cages and fishing hooks. Every kind of fish has a seasonal period is known by the locals, were some are summer fish such as (Talang Queen fish, Orange-finned Emperor and Jarbua Terapon) and winter fishe (Spangled Emperor, Kawakawa and Long-tail Tuna). Some fish lives in deep zones and others in sea-shore.

Al Miksar

A Bobbin used to make and repair fish nets.

Al Miyadeer

Hooks, in different sizes, used for fishing.

Al Leekh

Fishing net is made of cotton string and used for fishing.

Al Qaraa

Pumpkins used to float sardine nets and to mark the position of fish traps in the sea bed.

AL Mntab (Gaff)

A gaff is a pole with a sharp hook at its end, used to pull out the large fish which are stuck in the fishing string.

Al Halaqa

A large hook with a chain (*halaqa*) used for fishing sharks.

Al kheit

A simple hook attached at the end of a string, used for fishing.

Al Bild

A weight of lead used to sink fishing strings.

Al Manbaq

A small steel wire basket (smaller than *Al Siram*) used to carry fish to the market.

Al Gargour

A half oval or semicircular trap made locally in various sizes from palm fronds used for fishing.

Al Cheebal

Made from the light and porous 'root' of the palm frond. They are tied together in a particular way and attached to a string. It floats when thrown into the sea and used as a marker buoy for the fishing traps (*garageer*)

Al Siram

A big steel wire basket used to carry fish to the market.

Al Neza

Trident was used for spearing squid and crab.

These key questions are designed to help families, school groups and individuals to get more out of their visit to the museum. Please ask any of the museum staff to help you answering these questions if you need further support.

1. Many people from the UAE recognized the names of different boats according to its unique designs. What are the two main parts that distinguish one boat from other boats?
2. What were the traditional tools that used to build the traditional boat?
3. Mention one of the famous diving boats.
4. There were four main diving journeys in a year. What were they called?
5. Mention some of the different diving tools.
6. What is the local name of the pearl trader?
7. Pearl traders used different tools to measure the quality and the size of a pearl. What are these tools?
8. How did people use the palm tree in marine life?
9. What is the name of the famous Arab navigator?
10. What are the different navigation tools?

Marine Life

The unique geographic location of the United Arab Emirates played a great role in developing the history of the marine life. For example, many of the natural resources found in the UAE helped in building the diverse range of traditional boats, equipment and tools. These traditional boats and tools were mostly used for the pearling journey.

1) You can see various types of traditional boats. Write down three different kinds.

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2) Mention three kinds of fishing tools

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3) Mention three kinds of pearls

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4) Mention three types of traditional marine jobs

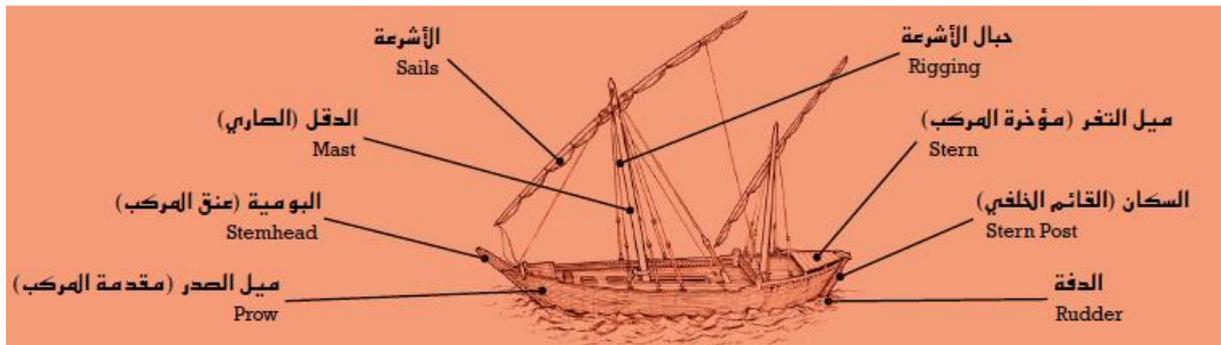
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Boats and Shapes

Many of the UAE traditional boats were named after their special shapes. Each boat has a unique prow and stern. The prow is the head of the boat while the stern is the back of it. This helped the people of the region to recognize these boats easily.

Description of each part of the ship



Look at the shapes of these boats and write their correct names.



Palm Tree

Emirati people depended on the palm tree to provide them with shade, food, and shelter. Many traditional boats, tools and equipment were also made from this blessed tree. People of the UAE are still using the palm tree but mostly as a source of food.

Use the table below to complete the information about each object.

| Object | Object Name | Purpose of Use |
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Write a story about your diving journey

Imagine that you are in 1960 and living in Al Khan area in Sharjah. Use the questions below to help you writing a story of your diving journey.

- 1) There were four main diving trips throughout the year; *Al Saif* (early summer), *Al Gaith* (the big journey) and *Al Radda* (the short autumn journey), *Al Gahha* (This is a daily diving trip to oyster beds near the coast). Which journey did you go to?
- 2) How long was your journey?
- 3) What were your tasks on the boat?
- 4) What did you wear?
- 5) What tools did you use?
- 6) What kind of pearls did you see during the journey?
- 7) What did you eat?
- 8) What kind of chants did you sing? How did you feel while chanting?
- 9) What kind of difficulties did you face during this journey?
- 10) How was the view on the boat when you saw your family from afar?
- 11) What did you feel when you met your family?
- 12) When did you arrive home?