

# THE RULING FAMILY OF BAHRAIN





SHAIKH SULMAN BIN HAMAD AL KHALIFA



HIS HIGHNESS SHAIKH ISA BIN SULMAN AL KHALIFA



The Bahrain Royal Family has successfully ruled the country since 1783. The family descended from the Anaza tribe of Al-Haddar, South Najd in Central Arabia. In 1708, the founder of the present Al-Khalifa family, Shaikh Khalifa bin Mohammed, separated from the clan when they settled the city of Kuwait. Eventually, Bahrain was captured and ruled by Al Khalifa family since 1783. Today about half of the cabinet ministers in Bahrain were selected from the royal family, and the Prime Minister is also a member of the family.

Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa has been ruling Bahrain since 1999. He is the son of the previous emir, Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa. He has a strong desire to preserve the heritage of the

country while also encouraging tourism. His interests include falconry, golf, fishing, tennis, and football. He is well known for the political reforms he brought to the Kingdom which included the release of every political prisoner, beginning of women's suffrage, and establishing parliament through elections.

Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa is the heir apparent to Bahrain's king. He is also the commander of the defence force of the country. Additionally, he is the Honorary President of the Bahrain Motor Federation. It was his idea to build the famous Bahrain International Circuit where the annual Bahrain Grand Prix is held as well as many other motorsports, including an event of the Australian V8 Supercar Series. Salman has a strong passion for youth sports and has worked tirelessly to upgrade the facilities for the youth in Bahrain.

The current Bahrain Royal family is largely responsible for the increase in tourism seen around the island today. As the country has taken on more liberal stances than that of its neighbours, many more western tourists have begun to visit to enjoy the beautiful scenery

Modern history of Bahrain is very much alive today starting with Shaikh Ahmed the Conqueror. For the next half a century many battles were fought on land and sea between the Shaikhs of Bahrain and the Sultans of Muscat. They also fought with their Najdi brethren of the Wahabe sect, and their former ally Rahma Al-Jalahma who had become a notorious sea pirate in the Gulf. Shaikh Ahmed died around 1796 and was succeeded by his sons Sulman and Abdulla, who ruled jointly until 1825 when Sulman died. Abdulla later ruled jointly with his nephew Khalifa bin Sulman, until the latter's death in 1834. Khalifa's son Mohammed, born in 1813, was perhaps one of the most colourful personalities in his time. He was associated with his granduncle Shaikh Abdulla in the Shaikship, then made war on Abdulla and was expelled from Bahrain. Shaikh Abdulla established the Kuheila't Jellaby strain of horse in Bahrain and during his reign they multiplied. Mohammed bin Khalifa then invaded Bahrain 1843 and drove out his granduncle Abdulla who settled in Arabia proper and founded the Al-Abdulla branch of the family. Shaikh Mohammed was a contemporary of Abbas Pasha of Egypt and it was he who sent many mares of the Jellaby and Dahman strain to Abbas Pasha. Perhaps Shaikh Mohammed was not a popular ruler, because he had to flee from Bahrain and his brother Ali became the new Shaikh. Shaikh Ali reigned for only one year, as his brother Mohammed, with his followers, invaded Bahrain again to seize power. A battle on horseback was fought on Rufa hill where Ali was killed. Alas, Shaikh Mohammed was not accepted as the new Shaikh, was expelled again and died in the Hijaz in 1890. He left 26 sons.