

SUWAIDI PEARLS - A TIMELESS TRADITION IN THE UAE AND A ONE-OF-A-KIND PEARL FARM IN RAS AL KHAIMAH



Images

As the region's first cultured pearl farm and the only traditional pearl farm in the UAE, Suwaidi Pearls is a leading national institution in Ras Al Khaimah and the nation's only remaining pearl farm that provides locally sourced pearls to jewellers across the world.

Years before the discovery of oil in the Arabian Gulf, pearling was the lifeblood of the local community and UAE's main source of wealth, with many nomadic merchants and fishermen becoming skillful in the art of pearling. Dating back to the 12th and 13th centuries, the Al Suwaidi family has been intrinsically linked to the history of pearling in the Gulf region, leading to the 20th century when Abdulla Al Suwaidi's grandfather was amongst the last remaining pearl divers in the UAE, before the discovery of oil and the invention of the 'cultured' pearl.

Established in 2005 by Abdulla Al Suwaidi to preserve his family's legacy and revive the country's proud tradition, Suwaidi Pearls is the only pearl farm in the region that utilises naturally bred, hand-seeded oysters as opposed to wild ones. This ultimately contributes to the local economic development and environmental preservation in Ras Al Khaimah. Apart from this, the pearl farm is completely eco-friendly with no machinery used in the harvesting of oysters and is instead powered by solar panels promoting the use of renewable energy and conservation in the UAE. Contributing to Ras Al Khaimah's integrated approach to sustainability, the cultural conservation of Suwaidi Pearls continues to preserve the Emirate's culture and traditions.

The pearl farm tour is one of the most unique cultural experiences in Ras Al Khaimah, attracting visitors from around the country and beyond. A visual delight, the cultured pearl farm is situated at the foot of the expansive Al Hajar mountain range in the northern town of Al Rams. The lagoon at Al Rams benefits from fresh rainwater from the Hajar mountains, filling the seawater with oxygen, making it the perfect environment for the pearls to foster.

Due to their distinctive size, quality and nacre thickness, cultured Arabian pearls require an intense process to be conducted in the most specific and controlled environment. Seeding takes place by inserting a round bead made from the mother-of-pearl shell, along with an oyster tissue, that allows a layer of nacre to grow around the bead, forming a pearl over time.

The farm tour starts with visitors boarding a traditional pearling boat to reach the floating pearl farm, offering a chance to enjoy views of the Hajar mountains and lush mangroves of the Emirate, home to pastel pink flamingos, western reef herons, Kalba collared kingfishers and the greater spotted eagle. The guided tour provides visitors a unique insight into the pearl cultivation and harvesting process, starting with the history of pearling, educating them on the evolution of the industry. Visitors will also learn about the diving



techniques that the fisherman once practised to collect oysters and explore the various tools they used from the trader's box 'bish-takh-tah'. Visitors also have the opportunity to open their oysters and see if they hit the jackpot and find their very own Arabian pearl to take home and treasure.

The pearl farm is people-of-determination-friendly and organises a host of immersive activities for visitors including kids, such as oyster-opening experiences, pearl diving, kayaking, mangrove tours, and ends with a traditional lunch.

Pearls harvested from the farm have adorned various jewellery collections of international brands such as Steven Webster, Van Cleef & Arpels and Mouawad, as well as customised crafted private collections for members of the royal families across the region. In 2018, Suwaidi Pearls also collaborated with a number of Emirati jewellery designers, who were all inspired by the region's pearling past, as well as renowned international designer, Sarah Ho. Drawing from the farm's spectacular pearling history and culture, Sarah designed a white gold, diamond and inlaid mother-of-pearl enamel ring to hold The Pearl of Arabia, a unique pearl discovered by the Suwaidi Pearl's founder Abdulla Al Suwaidi in 2006.

The gift shop is home to an exquisitely curated collection of some of the most delicate pearls from Ras Al Khaimah. Incorporated in stunning designs, guests can purchase the jewellery or request and design their own custom jewellery with a choice of pearls. Purchases can be made through cash, card and Apple Pay.

For more information and to book the tour, please contact +971 7221 1124 or +971 50 773 6086 or visit <http://www.suwaidipearls.ae/>.

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[About Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority \(RAKTDA\)](#)

The Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA) was established in May 2011 under the government of Ras Al Khaimah. RAKTDA aims to develop the Emirate's tourism infrastructure and establish Ras Al Khaimah as a world-class destination for leisure and business travel, creating sustainable investment opportunities and enhancing the quality of life for its residents. In order to achieve its goals, the Authority has a government mandate to license, regulate and monitor the Emirate's tourism and hospitality industry.

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