

The National Museum of Ras al-Khaimah

The National Museum is located in the historical fort of old Ras al-Khaimah, close to the sea. Founded in the beginning of the 19th century, it has been rebuilt and added to extensively over the last 200 years to meet the needs of the day. Originally erected as a defence structure, it has also served as the residence of the ruling Quwasim family since the 20th century and as police headquarter, before being converted into a museum in 1987.

Today, its rooms exhibit historical, ethnographical and archaeological material relating to this Emirate, and are open to the public. Many artefacts and collections were donated by the ruling Quwasim family and residents of Ras al-Khaimah. Archaeological excavations, surveys, and various scientific research projects provided further material and information about the history and traditions of the area.

The fort was originally constructed in traditional layer technique from limestone, beach rock (fossilized sand), and corals from the sea. Although fairly light-weight, the latter possess excellent insulation qualities, keeping buildings cool in summer and warm in winter. The massive rectangular tower is the oldest part of the fort. Its foundation originates from between 1809 – 1819, while the present tower was rebuilt after the British attacks of 1819. In those days it served exclusively as a defense structure and, unlike today, stood outside the perimeter of the old town of Ras al-Khaimah. All further architectural additions took place during the 19th and 20th century.

The picture we get today is that of a charming conglomerate of two-storey buildings surrounding an inner courtyard garden. The big rectangular tower is still

the most impressive feature, while a much smaller tower occupies the opposite corner of the fort.



The wind tower

Another prominent building is the wind tower, the traditional air-condition of the past. Its open sides are designed to catch the breeze from any direction, and a cross shaped interior division funnels it down into the room below, keeping it cool and ventilated, especially during the hot summer months. This effect could be enhanced with the help of wet cloths, hanging from the wind tower's interior wooden beams.

Traditional wooden doors with beautiful carved designs surround the courtyard. Made from tropical hardwood, they once adorned houses in the towns of Ras al-Khaimah, Rams, Ma'arid, and Jazirat al-Hamra.



**Government of Ras al-Khaimah
Department of Antiquities and Museums**

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Ras al-Khaimah Heritage

National Museum

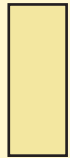


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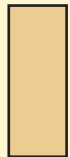
Various galleries and rooms surrounding the courtyard garden provide an insight into Ras al-Khaimah's unique cultural history:



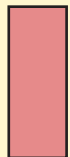
The Natural History section presents a large collection of shells, found along the coast of this Emirate, and marine fossils from the limestone mountains.



The Ethnography galleries introduce Ras al-Khaimah's diverse traditional architecture, pearl diving, mountain farming, palm garden culture, boat building, fishing and other aspects of its pre-oil era.



Further areas exhibit domestic activities of the past, as well as traditional reception rooms (majlis), and a wind tower room with different types of local air condition used before the arrival of electricity.



The Archaeology galleries present Ras al-Khaimah's long history through excavated objects from different sites and periods, ranging from the Stone Age to the medieval trading town of Julfar and the founding of Ras al-Khaimah.



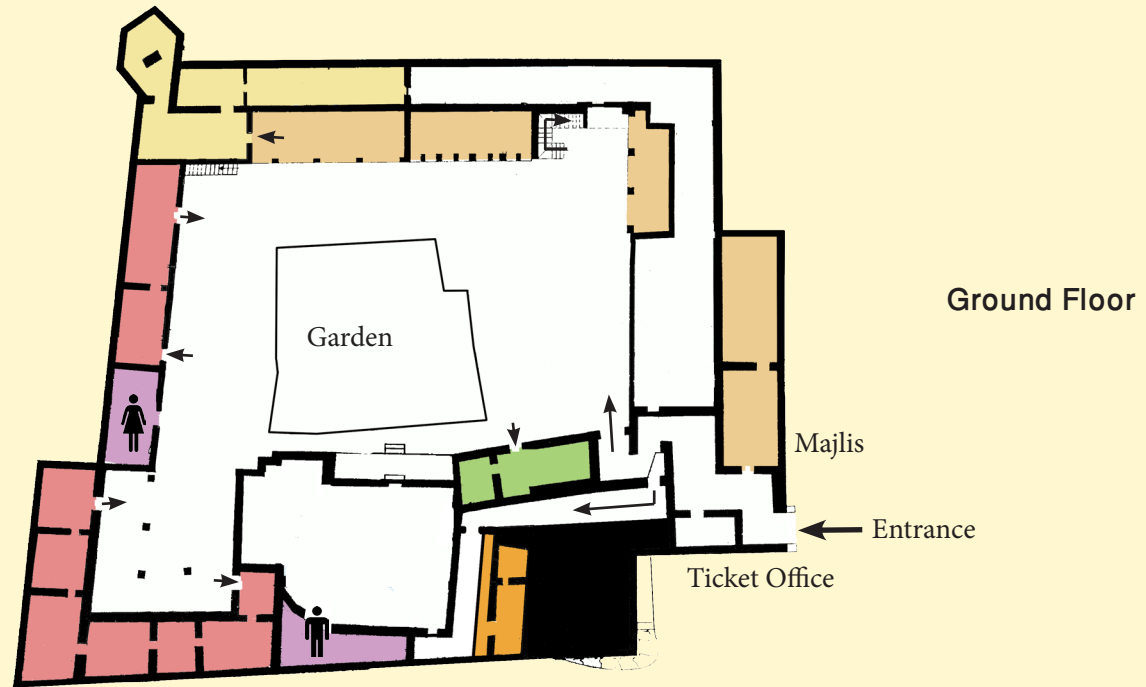
Two towers and further accessible rooms provide an insight into the architectural history of the fort.



Wash Rooms



Offices



First Floor

