

Old Dubai Field Trip: Walk through Dubai historical neighbourhoods: Shindagha, Al Fahidi (Bastakia) and Deira's Old Souks on Saturday, 19th March 2016

On Saturday 19th March Dubai Natural History Group is organizing an Old Dubai walk for members of all ENHG Chapters, including Dubai members.

We will start our walk in Shindagha, walk along the Creek, through the old textile souk and passing the Indian temple area to Al Fahidi (previously known as Bastakia). We will then take the traditional abra to cross the Creek and visit Deira old souks.

Shindagha, the strategic peninsula at the entrance to the Creek, was once the centre of Dubai's trade and economy as well as the residence of the ruling Maktoum family. With the development of new harbours, trade centres and the expansion of new Dubai, the historic neighbourhood of Shindagha has lost its importance and has remained at the edge of Dubai's modern life.

Almost completely demolished in 1991 to allow for new developments, Shindagha was later reconstructed based on old testimonials and photographs. As part of Dubai Creek – Khor Dubai historical area, Shindagha (unsuccessfully) participated in the 2013 UNESCO bid.

We will visit some of the local museums: Sheikh Saeed House, residence of Sheikh Saeed's father, Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashid al Maktoum; Juma and Obaid bin Thani's house, once owned by two rich merchants, now a Calligraphy Museum; we will pass by the new Camel, Horse and Traditional Architecture museums and stop by the 1939 Shindagha watch tower in Ghubaiba.

We will then walk through the old, but still lively textile souq to **Al Fahidi** area, previously known as Bastakia. This district is one of the heritage areas build along Dubai's Creek. It was originally named after Bastak, a province in southern Iran from where the merchants emigrated in the late 19th/ early 20th century to avoid taxation by the Iranian state.

The district is especially known for its famous wind towers (barjeel) to provide cooling in the hot summer months, the narrow winding streets, (sikkas) and traditional houses built around a central courtyard. It is at a short walking distance from Al Fahidi Fort, which houses the Dubai museum.

We will stop along the way for a lunch break, when you can sample some of the area's street food – shwarma, falafel,... or bring your own picnic lunch.

In the afternoon we will take a traditional boat, abra, for an hour-long ride along the Creek to see the Creek from a different, off-shore perspective.

We will disembark on Deira shore of the creek for a walk through famous **Deira souks** (Spice souk, Gold souk) and have some free time for browsing the souks.

Late afternoon we will cross the Creek on abra again to return to our starting point in Shindagha.

Time, location and cost

This is a full day trip.

We will **meet at 10 am in Shindagha Heritage Village parking** (map will be sent additionally).

There is a payable parking, 24 hrs for 10 AED.

(Alternatively you can park your car at one of the Metro stations (e.g. Rashidiya, UAE Exchange, etc) and use the Metro. Our meeting point is on the Green line, Ghubaiba metro station.)

There will be free time for lunch (you can bring your own picnic lunch or buy some street food).

Abra crossing is 1 AED, abra 1 hour Creek trip is around 15 – 20 AED per person (depending on number of people).

Entrance to Sheikh Saeed house is 3 AED.

You will need:

- comfortable shoes (all day walk!)
- water and snacks, (picnic lunch)
- hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, camera and perhaps a light sweater for boat ride and chilly museum rooms.

Please bring approx 20 - 30 AED per person in small denominations for parking, museum entrances and abra ride.

Please note that the number of participants is limited and distributed among all four ENHG Chapters.

If interested please contact Sonja at lavson@gmail.com