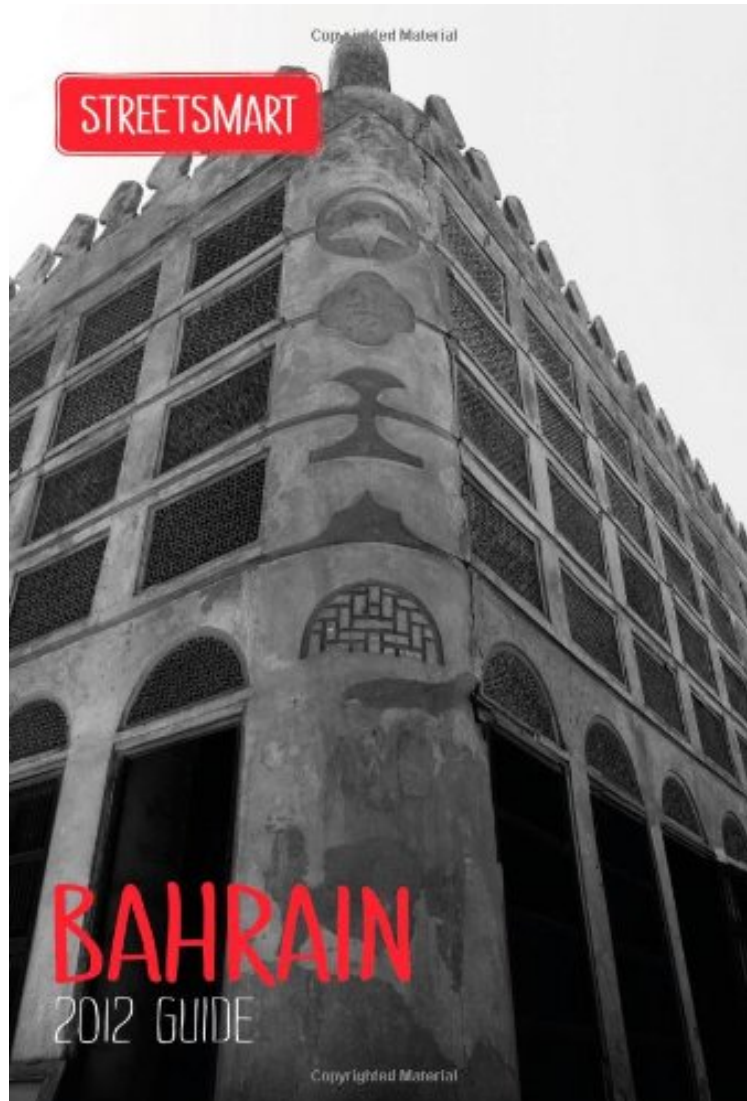


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Melissa van Maasdyk

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Melissa van Maasdyk : Streetsmart Bahrain before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Streetsmart Bahrain:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Headed to Bahrain? Buy this bookBy KimberlyJust returned from a month-long visit to Bahrain. I purchased this guide a month before my trip and found it indispensable during my stay. I also brought along the Oman UAE the Arabian Peninsula (Multi Country Travel Guide) but I found the Streetsmart Bahrain 2012 Guide more interesting and informative, probably because the author, Melissa van Maasdyk, has actually lived in Bahrain. The Muharraq Walking Tour (p. 42) was the highlight of my trip and this section alone is worth the cost of the book. My entire family, including my sometimes grumpy husband and 3-year old daughter really

enjoyed touring the historic homes in Muharraq and we would have never discovered them if it wasn't for this guide. The information is up-to-date and I encountered only a couple restaurants/stores that had changed names or closed since the book was published. My only complaint is that the maps are hard to read (small font) and the pull-out map in the back of the book is completely useless. While there are good directions provided for the sites on the driving tours, other sites, such as A'ali Pottery Workshops, are hard to find without any landmarks or turn-by-turn driving instructions. Also, it seems that everything listed in the book is highly recommended so it's difficult to choose what to see, where to eat, etc. on a tight schedule. Not knowing what to expect before my trip (Bahrain is not exactly a top tourist destination for most Americans), I really enjoyed my visit and credit this book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Hidden Treasures By Foodlover I have just bought Streetsmart Bahrain ahead of my second visit to the country and am amazed at what an Aladdin's Cave of interest still awaits my discovery. I don't think I saw even a quarter of what's covered in this rich and colourful guide, and I am so looking forward to going back to explore the hidden alleyways and especially to try out many of the exciting restaurants and cafes I missed. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Bahrain travel book By M. Cowe It is a much smaller book than I was expecting, but it actually has a lot of information and is up to date. Happy I bought it.

Featuring a mix of mainstream must-sees and hidden gems, Streetsmart Bahrain is a guide that not only helps you see the country, but feel it, taste it... really get under its skin. Listings cover everything from the country's ancient archaeological sites and eclectic souqs to its myriad restaurants, and leisure options such as pearl diving and partying after dark, plus of course where to lay your head. But what gives the guide its unique 'insider' edge are tips spread throughout the book by residents shaping Bahrain's lifestyle (artists, chefs, DJs, designers...), who take the reader off the beaten track to discover hidden-away spots for tasty street food, shisha by the sea and tailors making suits to Savile row standards for a snip, to name just a couple of examples. Enhancing the ride are illustrated maps to areas that deserve deeper exploration, such as the treasure-filled Manama souq and historical Muharraq, once central to Bahrain's famed pearling trade. Add walking tours, desert drives and packed itineraries for one to seven days, and you have the next best thing to a cool, informed resident friend showing you around.

[...] This guidebook is like no other in the kingdom. Every page is filled with extraordinary detail, each section featuring a unique, illustrated map, as well as personal profiles of people such as shop owners, architects and entrepreneurs. With sections covering nightlife to malls, tailors to restaurants and beaches, this little wonder has it all. The best thing is that it's not just for tourists; every resident on the island would discover something new with their own copy. Melissa has created an innovative gem of a paperback that will truly open your eyes to what there is to discover on the island. [...] Buy it and keep it on you at all times. Trust us - it's worth it. --Fact Bahrain magazine, April 2012; [...] The best thing about the guide is that, beside Bahrain's key tourist sites, it includes some real hidden gems. So next week when my family visits, I am going to travel off road and follow it deep into the souq to visit Azzam Ayurvedic, 'which would not be out of place in Harry Potter's wizard's market, Diagon Alley', and through Muharraq's alleys to the first coffee shop founded by an out-of-work pearl diver. My brother-in-law who keeps a photo album of his favorite dishes will love going deep into the heart of Gudaibiya to sample the best tikka in Bahrain. I may or may not tell you about our adventures. Unlike Melissa, I like to keep secrets. [...] If you want to tour the real Bahrain or need a detailed guide for a day trip, pick up a copy of Streetsmart Bahrain. --Tales of Dragons, Rabbits and Roosters blog, March 2012 A new comprehensive guidebook bursting with suggestions of things to do in Bahrain and where to go has been launched. Handily sized, its author says it's [been designed to] easily snuggle into a ladies' handbag despite its 216 pages being packed with listings and images. [...] An admirer of the local culture, who loves to meet people and eat at street cafes, Melissa, 44, said that the book was the result of her passion for the country and her desire to tell the world about all its exciting and wonderful facets. Sipping her favourite chai haleeb on the benches of Al Maseela Cafe in Manama, she said that [these include] tourist attractions, eating-out-venues, resorts, beach clubs, spas and salons. [...] If walking appeals a section entitled 'Walk this Way' chalks the Muharraq walking tour, a route that takes people on a trek around traditional houses, as well as museums and coffee shops in the area. You could also hire a boat and go to Jarada Island, described in the guide as 'a spit of sand reminiscent of the Maldives, where the water is a crystal clear turquoise blue'. [...] A major section of the book has been dedicated to the various cuisines in the Kingdom, something Melissa confessed to being her favourite part of putting the guide together. Although it's not a comprehensive list, she has highlighted a number of outlets offering what she says is Bahrain's favourite [street food], tikka, alongside restaurants serving up rice dishes and grills from Persia, mezze from Lebanon, stews from Iraq, and Jordanian and Palestinian sweets. [...] Other highlights include information on hidden delights such as an elderly carpenter who sells antiques, the oldest sword-maker in the region and tips on getting local dresses and suits tailored. --Gulf Weekly newspaper, April 4-10 2012 A pocketful of pleasures - Melissa van Maasdyk's just-released Streetsmart Bahrain guidebook (Streetsmart Publications) is invaluable, offering a mix of must-sees, hidden gems and insider tips. It includes souk guides, walking tours and interviews with Bahraini artists and architects, writers and archaeologists, perfume makers and fashion designers, carpet sellers and filmmakers about what to see, where to eat, shop and chill.

Streetsmart Bahrain also provides an excellent map to the main sights of Old Muharraq and a walking tour. --The Australian newspaper, June 30 2012

About the Author

With a Masters in translation under her belt, Melissa found her way into publishing when Marie Claire South Africa advertised for a French-speaking copy editor. She soon convinced her editor to let her write about her two true loves, food and travel, and, 15 years on, has worked on several other international titles (as a sub-editor, translator, editor and writer on all things lifestyle), among them Marie Claire and Elle Decoration in the UK, and Time Out Bahrain, on which she was launch editor. During her six years living in the Gulf archipelago, she also freelanced for various other magazines, as well as doing PR for galleries, and running a grassroots arts organisation, finally deciding to combine her rich and varied experiences in this travel guide, which she hopes will be the first in a streetsmart series.