

Crafts and Traditional Industries in Al-Ahsa

The Al-Ahsa population is renowned for its proficiency in crafts and traditional industries, intricately linked to the economic activities and practical necessities of the people. These encompass a diverse range of sectors, including textile production, goldsmithing, the crafting of palm leaf products, wooden creations, blacksmithing, copper and silver work, ornamentation, pottery, and the restoration of clay buildings. Notably, some of these crafts are meticulously fashioned at home, with the active involvement and contribution of women.

The coffee pot, known as dallah, stands out as a prime example. Crafted from copper and used in the preparation of Arabic coffee, the dallah of Al-Ahsa is esteemed across the Gulf countries for its exquisite beauty, design, and overall appearance. Pottery, made from the local clay, addresses practical needs with the creation of household essentials such as air coolers and boilers.





In Al-Ahsa, the crafts and industries extend beyond mere utilitarian purposes, forming an integral part of the region's identity. Mount Al-Qarah, a significant location, has been developed and opened to visitors through a project initiated by the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, showcasing the prominence of these traditional practices.

Palm leaf products play a vital role, with fibers and palm branches utilized in construction and agriculture. These materials also find application in crafting pillows and cushions for traditional Arab seating, as well as the unique four-pocket bag (marwa), resembling cones for transporting water pots.

The importance of palm in Al-Ahsa is further emphasized through various traditional industries, such as food mats, date products, gabions, hand fans, food covers, and hand-made airscrews. Al-Sumut, a leafless palm branch cut into sticks, serves as a versatile raw material, yielding essential products like cages for wet, milk, and manz (baby bed).

The craft of albushoot, or bisht, distinguishes Al-Ahsa in the Kingdom and Arab countries. Recognized for its quality and available in diverse sizes and colors, this finely crafted bisht experiences high demand, especially from royalty, ministers, and scholars.

Blacksmithing is another essential craft driven by the agricultural prosperity of Al-Ahsa. Families engaged in blacksmithing produce an array of tools, including pots, trays, sickles, and various accessories vital for multiple fields.

The craft of whistle involves the cleaning and polishing of metal utensils made from copper and silver, restoring them to a shiny, new-like condition. This meticulous process is particularly applied to revered items like the coffee pot (dallah).

Al-Saram, a craftsman farmer, plays a crucial role in harvesting wet grains from the palm tree. Meanwhile, the tradition of baking in Al-Ahsa is deeply rooted, with a reputation for the production of white and red Hasawi bread made from flour and dates. Additionally, regal bread, known as Tawa bread, is crafted on iron sheets, with some women in both cities and villages actively participating in this craft.



Ibrahim ALSHUBAITH
(Focal Point of Al-Ahsa)