

The Kuwaiti royal family leads a life so luxurious that no billionaire can even think of matching – Their palace can fit two Disneyland Parks & has its own tunnel network while their massive private jet fleet is bigger than many airlines.



Kuwait may be a small nation geographically, but financially speaking, there aren't many countries like it. The ruling family and its immoderate lifestyle testify to the oil-rich state's wealth.

History says that Kuwait was a relatively poor fishing and trading village at a crossroads between Persia and the Ottoman Empire centuries ago. In 1899 it became a British Protectorate when Mubarak Al-Sabah, the brother of its local ruler at the time, Mohammed, killed his brothers and usurped local authority, then signed an agreement with the British government of India recognising British control over Kuwait, in return for shielding Mubarak from the legal consequences under Ottoman law of murdering his brothers.

Everything changed by 1930 when oil was found and which catapulted Kuwait to indescribable wealth. As per the [SCMP](#), the ruling Al Sabah family is estimated to be worth a whopping \$360 billion. This makes them second richest family in the world after Saudi Arabia's house of Saud. Their fortune results from channelling the proceeds of exporting Kuwait's oil.

The Sabah family live in majestic palaces, travel on land, sea, and skies in supreme style, and own everything money can buy from private jets to mega yachts. It is no wonder they have

extravagance following them like a shadow. Let's take a closer look at the life of the members of the House of Sabah:



The fabulous life of the men of the House of Sabah

With over 1000 royal family members, the clan that rules Kuwait today and siphons its oil wealth is directly connected to the murder by Mubarak of his brothers. The men of the family lead an indulgent lifestyle. They live in heavenly abodes like the humungous Bayan Palace and own a fleet of fancy cars, private jets, superyachts, and horses of the highest order.

The fabulous life of the women of the House of Sabah-

Women such as Sheikha Maryam Hamad Al-Sabah (granddaughter of a former Emir) and Sheikha Paula Mubarak Al Sabah (a US citizen and wife of a son of a former Emir) gave the world a rare glimpse into the over-the-top art and fashion choices of Sabah women. Maryam Al-Sabah, a law graduate from London's King's College, made headlines for splurging \$20 million on a diamond and sapphire necklace. At home in Bayan Palace or London, she is encircled by maids and butlers to accomplish her every need and often made news for her ultra-expensive shopping trips.



Then there is the art-loving American member of the family, Sheikha Paula. The wife of a son of a former Emir doesn't believe in donning palace walls with expensive art. So massive is her collection she works the other way around and erects walls for artwork at homes in Paris, London, New York, and Kuwait.



Sheikha Majda Al Sabah's Moroccan palace is so magnanimous that it featured in the inaugural issue of Vogue Living Arabia magazine.

Kuwait's multi-billion-dollar Wealth fund is the Middle East's oldest

Like the Al Saud's of Saudi Arabia (\$776 billion Public Investment Fund) and Al Nahyan family of Abu Dhabi (\$708 billion in assets), the Sabah family controls the Kuwait Investment Authority that boasts \$803 billion in assets. To put things into perspective, Kuwait is about 121 times smaller than Saudi Arabia, or just 0.83% in size of the Kingdom. This national savings pot of over \$800 billion is a diamond-studded crutch for the country for life after oil, boasting more than half of its investments in the U.S. The Kuwait Investment Authority has stakes in asset managers such as BlackRock, the UK's Associated British Ports, and Wall Street banks Citigroup and Merrill Lynch. There is nothing untapped, from ports, airports, and power distribution systems worldwide. The Sabah family has ultimate control over this gigantic treasure trove generated by Kuwait's oil resources.



Interiors of the super-opulent Bayan Palace

Sabah leaders reside in blissful palaces

Bayan Palace, headquarters of the Sabah rule, is spread across an area of 1,399,500 square meters, which makes it two times bigger than Disneyland. Bayan Palace comprises six compounds featuring 18 buildings, including a magnificent Conference Hall that houses 1000 people and the Amiri Tent.



An unheard-of feature is the palace service station with a 2.6 kilometres service tunnel that caters to the buildings inside. The Conference Hall comprises a Celebration Hall, Reception Area, Press Hall, and Library.

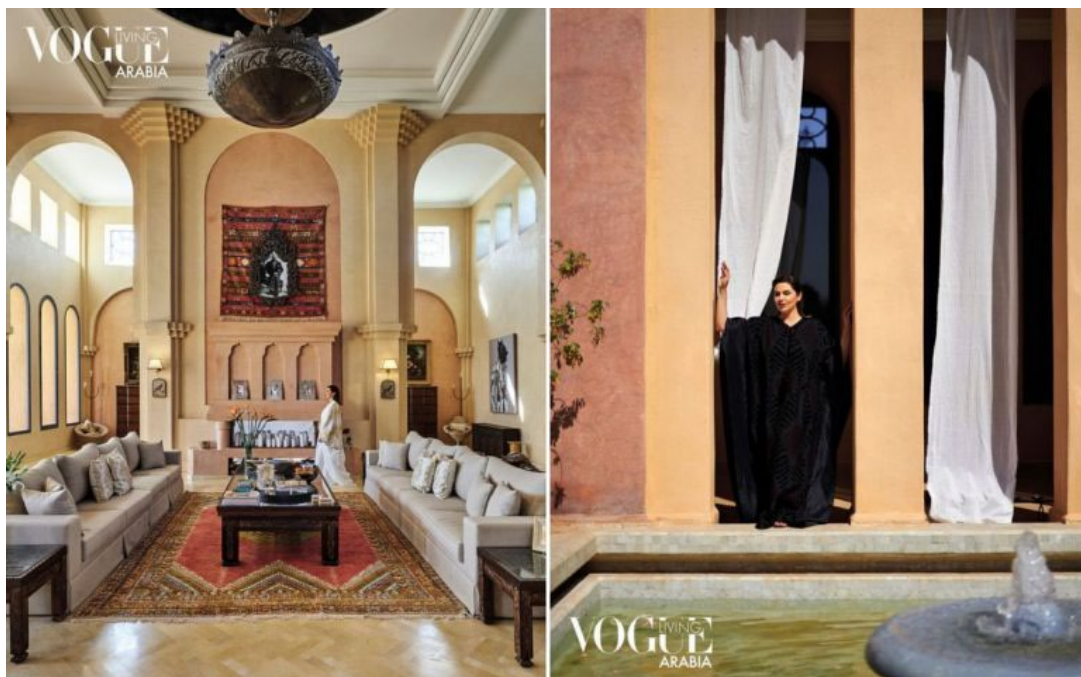
The full true cost of Bayan Palace, officially a government building constructed at public expense, but effectively the private domain of the Sabah family, has never been established.

But it is just one of many ...



Sheikha Paula in the Dhar Nour palace.

The Dharnour Palace, or Palace of Light, is home to Sheikha Paula Al Sabah. Fascinatingly, the art-filled sea-facing estate includes a facade packed with mushrooms. The main salon of the Dharnour Palace opens its doors to multi-million-dollar art by Jean-Marc Bustamante, Parvis Tanavoli, and Jamal Abdul Rahim.



Then there is the \$3 million holiday home of the members of the Sabah clan in Morocco, known as Marrakech Home. Sheikha Majda Al Sabah was behind this exquisite property with unbridled Atlas Mountains views and lush olive groves. Most of the construction and decor work was instructed over phone calls!



Sheikha Majda Al Sabah

The 17,000 sq.m. property boasts expensive furniture gathered during travels.



The Sabah family's car collection is displayed in a museum

The Sabah clan owns an ultra-luxe assemblage of rare, vintage expensive cars.



The collection includes former state limousines of Kuwait and other royal households, Minervas from 1904 and 1924, and at least three Aston Martins from the original James Bond movies. Supercars in the royal fleet include a custom Porsche 911 turbo S, Ferrari F40, Rolls Royce, and a 1960s Porsche Carrera. The cars are maintained by a crew of professionals. The museum also features a traffic parkour for children to hone their driving skills on electric cars.



A hedonistic love for horses

So wealthy are the Sabah family; even their horses live in mansions. The Arabian horse is part of Kuwait's legacy, and they warrant the breeding of purebred Arabian horses and straight Egyptian bloodlines in the Bait Al Arab Kuwait State Stud. Officially, this is a state-owned public asset, but in effect it is the private domain of the Sabah family. Horses live like kings in the 1000-acre Arabian Horse Center, which includes an administration building, a mosque, stables, a greenhouse, and an artificial lake.



Private and palatial jets of the Sabah

Size matters. Donald Trump agrees, as per Newsweek he once stated that Emir Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah's aircraft was bigger than his. The 45th President of the United States compared his Boeing 757 personal plane to the luxury-laden Boeing 747-400 of the Emir. The royal fleet features not one but two Boeing aircraft, the aforementioned and another Boeing 737. It also includes at least five Airbuses.



These aircraft usually cost \$400-\$500 million and, keeping the owners in mind, are lavishly decorated with state-of-the-art amenities. From spacious cabins to children's playrooms, prayer rooms, conference areas, and lounges, the flying mansions include every comfort 30,000 feet in the air. Kuwait Airways also purchased three Gulfstream V aircraft for government officials, costing almost \$120 million in 1998.

Again, as in the case of many such assets, these aircraft are maintained at public expense but are privately owned by the Sabah clan and used exclusively by them.