



Dar Zahran Heritage Building



By Laila Albina

The Dar Zahran Heritage Building was initially a home property of Ramallah's Zahran Jaghab family. For over 250 years, the home served multiple uses that include being a private family home for the Zahran family and a guest chamber for Ramallah passersby. The building is a traditional Palestinian old stone structure with a classic two-story layout. The exterior shows the enchanting design of conventional Palestinian homes in Ramallah. The building now feels like a



A photo from 1923 of the Zahran family who actually lived in the house. The baby is Yasmine Zahran.



Dar Zahran turn of the 20th century. Photo courtesy of American Congress Library.

traditional home that allows us to take a glimpse into the past. Today, the Dar Zahran Heritage Building, located in Ramallah al-Tahta (as locals call the old town), is known as a historical Ramallah landmark that carries a long and idiosyncratic history.

As an enduring symbol of the Palestinian cause, Dar Zahran gives an accurate depiction of Palestinian culture and heritage. It is funded completely by the Zahran family and is run in order to keep alive their passion for history in Ramallah. Currently, the heritage building hosts an art gallery as well as a photo gallery of people and locations in Ramallah and Palestine from the years 1850 to 1979. It also includes a Palestine-inspired souvenir shop, and on weekends hosts a small fair-trade corner that sells authentic Palestinian foods, pottery, embroidery, jewelry, books, and soaps. The artisans whose works are displayed in the art gallery are locals and consistently handpicked by Zahran Jaghab, the founder of Dar Zahran. The photos and art pieces displayed include a

Dar Zahran today.





Photo exhibition.

variety of black-and-white photos, traditionally painted work, and modern artworks, many of them by the well-known artist couple Ismail Shammout and Tamam Al-Akhal, that revolve around the life, traditions, struggle, and beauty of everyday Palestinian existence. The historical artifacts and documents that were on display before COVID-19 will be gradually restored to the exhibition, starting in mid-July, as will a collection of Palestinian traditional embroidered dresses.

The Dar Zahran Heritage Building is an open environment that pushes for innovation and the advancement of creativity in all shapes and forms as they relate to expanding the boundaries of passion and history. A section soon to be opened at Dar Zahran is the Yasmin Zahran Historical Library that will include a collection of old Palestinian books that follow the historical paths of Ramallah, Palestinian families, and important Palestinian histories.

If you are in Ramallah, Dar Zahran is a must-visit! It is a place where you can enjoy a journey through centuries of Palestinian life, taking a peek into the histories and traditions of old Palestine to modern-day Palestine. Dar Zahran allows you to experience the life, love, and culture of Palestine, more specifically Ramallah, through food, art, expression, and creativity.

Unless otherwise, article photos are courtesy of Dar Zahran.

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Artifacts, dating as far back as the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.



Artworks by Ismail Shammout and Tamam Al-Akhal, exhibited on the lower level of Dar Zahran.

The courtyard at the entry to Dar Zahran.

