The traditional Dhow

by Diane Trader

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The humble, traditional Dhow of the Middle East has many forms. A dhow is a sailing vessel, which has been used and is still used for different purposes depending on what they were purpose-built for. Quite honestly, it is hard to trace the origins of the dhow. Nobody knows how the term was coined and why is it has been called by that name; although the closest relation would be the Nao which is a term used to refer to any sailing vessel in India. Dhows are purpose-built in the Middle East and are still built today just like the sailing vessels in India. They have been used over centuries with the first mentions of the vessel being traced as far back, as the 8th century. It has often been a controversial topic as to who invented and created the dhow. Historians believe that it was the Arabs; though many refuse to believe the same simply because European mariners have been referring to any sailing vessel originating from the east coast of Africa as a dhow.

Dhows were initially built for trade; they could carry tonnes of cargo which ranged from fish to dates to timber, which were widely traded within the area around the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. But along with carrying cargo they soon started transporting people within the region and soon became a means of transport.

Today a dhow in Dubai is used to transport goods, people and have even entered the cruise industry. They are a lot different in terms of the propulsion technology; wherein modern dhows are powered by motors. If you are visiting Dubai, take some time out and hop on a ride on one of these large sailing vessels that have stood the test of time. A Dhow cruise company in Dubai makes the whole experience of travelling and sightseeing from a dhow a lot more accessible and grand. They have all the creature comforts and make the cruising and sightseeing experience a lot more comfortable; compared to the bare bones experience of the trading vessels. They have been used over the years to host events like birthday parties, to conferences with a twist serving the best food catered by the best hotels. A dinner cruise dhow in Dubai makes for the perfect setting for dining with a view of the cityâ€™s skyline. Although modern dhows rarely rely on wind and sails for propulsion, the experience aboard a dhow still manages to capture and transport travellers into a time when sea-faring, was a something only a few braved sailors would dare take up.

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