



Image credit: NASA

[Download Image Here](#)

## The Pearl

Doha, the capital city of Qatar, was little more than a backwater pearl diving village on the shores of the Persian Gulf until its British Protectorate status ended in 1971. Thanks to tremendous wealth generated by vast natural gas and oil reserves Qatar now has the highest per capita income in the world.

The paisley-shaped configuration of artificial islands seen in this image is called the Pearl, a massive man-made complex of luxury hotels and apartment towers, marinas, and high-end shopping and dining. It was built atop one of the rich oyster beds that sustained the region's economy prior to the oil boom.

Earlier practitioners of land reclamation, of which the Pearl and similar projects in Dubai and Abu Dhabi are just recent examples, include the Ancient Egyptians, prehistoric inhabitants of Scotland and Ireland, and the Aztecs.

