

## Overview of Qatar

The stark desert peninsula of Qatar extends into the Persian Gulf, bordered by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Its area may be small, but the independent emirate is exceedingly wealthy, with one of the highest per capita incomes in the world thanks to its oil and gas resources.

Whether visiting Qatar for business or pleasure, most travellers make the stylish capital of Doha their base. Formerly a quaint and busy pearl-diving and fishing village, Doha is today one of the most prominent cities in the Middle East owing mainly to its importance as a major trading centre.

It has a large British and American expatriate population (the Al Udeid air base was headquarters for the US invasion of Iraq in 2003), which has moulded the city into an interesting blend of eastern and western culture and architecture.

Tourists tend to spend their time on the Doha Corniche, a palm-fringed public promenade that extends for four miles (7km) along the seafront and is lined with five and six-star resort hotels, restaurants, shops, beaches and recreational areas.

Although there is some adventure to be found in the glittering sands beyond Doha, the biggest drawcard for visitors to Qatar is shopping, whether it is in the exotic traditional markets (souqs) or the plethora of massive ultramodern malls that fill the city centre. In addition to this impressive retail offering, Doha is fast becoming a sought after destination for foodies because of its sophisticated fine-dining scene.

Those who want to explore outside the city can undertake excursions to interesting little towns, fishing villages, beautiful beaches, camel racing events, luxury resorts, and the Al Maha Sanctuary at Shahaniya, where the near-extinct Arabian Oryx is being protected. The Oryx is thought to be the origin of the legend of the unicorn and is Qatar's national symbol, flying high on the tails of Qatar Airways jetliners.

Whether it is learning to haggle at the souks, fine-tuning your dune driving skills, relaxing on the beach, or marvelling at the wonders of the Arabian world in one of the many museums, Qatar has something for every traveller.

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## Key Facts

### **Language:**

Arabic is the official language, but English is widely spoken.

### **Passport/Visa:**

Visitors should have tickets and documents for return or onward travel, and sufficient funds to cover their stay. If on a tourist visa, visitors should have proof of a confirmed hotel reservation and sufficient funds or a credit card. If holding a visa for Oman, an additional visa for Qatar is not required, though travellers are not allowed to depart to a third country. The government of Qatar does not accept temporary passports. All visitors travelling to Qatar aged 6 and above regardless of vaccination status must bring a PCR test certificate with a negative result valid for 48 hours, or a Rapid Antigen test certificate valid for 24 hours ahead of the scheduled departure time of the flight to Qatar. A Rapid Antigen self-test will not be considered valid for travel. It is highly recommended that travellers' passports have at least six months' validity remaining after the intended date of departure from their travel destination. Immigration officials often apply different rules to those stated by travel agents and official sources.

### **Currency:**

The official currency is the Qatari riyal (QAR), which divides into 100 dirhams. Money can be exchanged at banks, the airport and exchange dealers. Banks are generally open Saturday to Thursday 7:30am to 1pm, and ATMs are widespread. All major credit cards are widely accepted.

### **Electricity:**

The electrical current is 240 volts, 50Hz. Round pin plugs with grounding as well as rectangular blade plugs are in use.

# Travel to Qatar

## Climate in Qatar

Qatar has a dry, subtropical desert climate. The sun shines virtually every day and rainfall is almost non-existent, averaging about three inches (80mm) a year and falling only in winter. Summers (June to September) are sizzling hot by day, and warm at night, with temperatures often hitting 104F (40C) or above. Winters are only slightly cooler by day but can be very chilly at night. The best time to visit Qatar is between October and April, when daytime temperatures are bearable and there is little threat of sand storms.

## Health Notes when travelling to Qatar

All eligible travellers should be up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines, and it is recommended that visitors be up to date with routine vaccinations such as MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) and tetanus-diphtheria. Vaccinations are also recommended for hepatitis A and hepatitis B. Emergency medical treatment is excellent in the big cities but can be expensive, so travellers are advised to hold comprehensive medical insurance.

## Safety Notes when travelling to Qatar

Crime levels are low in Qatar but, like most countries in the Gulf Region, it is rated as being under high threat of indiscriminate terrorist attacks against western interests. Visitors should be vigilant in public places. As a precaution, women are advised to take care when travelling alone at night.

## Customs in Qatar

Qatar is an Islamic state, which prohibits drinking alcohol in public other than at licensed hotel restaurants and bars. Religious customs should be respected, particularly during the month of Ramadan when eating, drinking, and smoking in public are forbidden by Muslim Law. Intimacy between men and women in public can lead to arrest and homosexuality is illegal.

Visitors should dress modestly and respect local customs. Women should cover their shoulders and avoid wearing shorts or short skirts. The right hand should be used for everything, including eating and the giving and receiving of things, as the left is considered unclean. The import of pornographic material, non-Islamic religious material, alcohol, or pork products is strictly prohibited.

## Duty Free in Qatar

Travellers to Qatar do not have to pay duty on 400 cigarettes and personal gifts and items up to the value of 3000 QAR. Alcohol may not be imported under any circumstances. Travellers are also prohibited from importing pork-related products and pornographic or sexually explicit material.

## Doing Business in Qatar

Since a large portion of Qatar's population is comprised of foreign nationals, foreigners might find themselves dealing exclusively with other expats in a corporate milieu that they are familiar with. For those who will work within Arabic business culture, it is important to bear in mind that Qatar is an Islamic country, and that visitors should always remain sensitive and respectful of the large influence that these religious beliefs have on ordinary social life.

The business culture of Qatar can be described as 'typically Arabic', in that a great emphasis is placed on personal relationships between business associates. Qatari businessmen prefer to do business with people they are familiar with and who they feel they can trust.

For this reason, foreigners will probably be required to engage the services of a local agent (or sponsor) in Qatar, who'll be able to provide them with important introductions and recommendations. The start of a professional relationship will often be dedicated to getting to know each other and business itself may be slow to start. Foreigners shouldn't get impatient: long-term, personal business relationships in Qatar are certainly worth the investment of their time and energy.

The management style that predominates in Qatar is strictly hierarchical. Decisions are made at the top level and clear, direct instructions are given to staff who are expected to follow them to the letter. It is unusual to hear the word 'no' outright in Qatar. A more polite, indirect method of refusal is usually preferred.

Business etiquette in Qatar reflects the close relationship between personal and professional life, despite the hierarchical structures. Foreigners should use Arabic titles where appropriate, such as Haji and Sheikh, to indicate their respect for their associates. They should make sure that, when discussing business, they can deliver everything they promise, as verbal commitments are treated as solemnly as written contracts in Qatar.

Business meetings in Qatar will most likely be lengthy, and subject to numerous personal digressions, and perhaps even unexpected visitors. It is important to remain patient, even if the meeting's agenda is abandoned. Foreigners should not resort to hard-sell tactics, as this may well be interpreted as aggression.

Visiting business people should not publicly criticise or undermine any associates. If they feel the need to say something, it's best to do so in private. It is common to exchange business cards when meeting new associates for the first time. Foreigners must make sure their details are printed in Arabic on the reverse side of their card and always spend a little time regarding someone else's card before putting it away.

Business dress is smart, formal, and conservative, especially for women, who must take care not to wear anything too revealing. The official language of Qatar is Arabic, though English is widely spoken and widely understood in the business world.

Business hours are generally 7.30am (or 8am) to about 6pm. Friday is a day of rest and most companies will also give either Thursday or Saturday off; international companies tend to favour closure on Saturday.

## Communication in Qatar

The international access code for Qatar is +974. Hotels and cafes offering free WiFi are widely available. As international roaming costs can be high, purchasing a local prepaid SIM card can be a cheaper option.

## Tipping in Qatar

A service charge of 10 percent is usually added to hotel and restaurant bills in Qatar, though many people add a bit extra for exceptional service. If there is no service charge, a 10 to 15 percent tip is appreciated. Taxi drivers do not expect a tip but it is polite to round up the fare.

## Passport/Visa Note

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It is highly recommended that travellers' passports have at least six months' validity remaining after the intended date of departure from their travel destination. Immigration officials often apply different rules to those stated by travel agents and official sources.

## Entry Requirements

### Entry requirements for Americans:

United States citizens require a passport that is valid for six months beyond their date of arrival. No visa is required.

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for a maximum stay of 30 days, and the period can be extended for another 30 days.

**Entry requirements for Canadians:**

Canadian citizens must have passports valid for a minimum of three months beyond date of arrival. Nationals of Canada do not require a visa for a maximum of 30 days. They can apply to extend their stay another 30 days.

**Entry requirements for UK nationals:**

Passports must be valid for a minimum of 6 months from the arrival date. British citizens do not require a visa for a maximum of 30 days and can apply to extend their stay another 30 days.

**Entry requirements for Australians:**

Passports must be valid for a minimum of six months after travellers plan to leave the country. Australians citizens do not require a visa for stays up to 30 days. They can apply to extend their stay for another 30 days.

**Entry requirements for Irish nationals:**

Irish citizens must have a passport valid for six months from the arrival date. Nationals of Ireland do not require a visa for a maximum of 30 days. They can apply to extend their stay for another 30 days.

**Entry requirements for New Zealanders:**

Passports must be valid for a minimum of six months from the arrival date. New Zealanders do not require a visa for stays up to 30 days. They can apply to extend their stay for another 30 days.

**Entry requirements for South Africans:**

Passports must be valid for a minimum of six months from date of arrival. South Africans citizens do not require a visa for stays up to 30 days. They can apply to extend their stay for another 30 days.

## **Tourist Offices**

Qatar National Tourism Council: <http://www.visitqatar.qa/>

## **Qatar Embassies**

### **In the United States:**

Embassy of Qatar, Washington DC, United States: +1 202 274 1600.

### **In Canada:**

Embassy of Qatar, Ottawa, Canada: +1 613 241 4917.

### **In the United Kingdom:**

Embassy of Qatar, London, United Kingdom (also responsible for Ireland): +44 (0)20 7493 2200.

### **In Australia:**

Embassy of Qatar, Canberra, Australia: +61 26152 8888.

### **In New Zealand:**

Embassy of Qatar, Tokyo, Japan (responsible for New Zealand): +81 (3) 5475 0611.

### **In South Africa:**

Embassy of Qatar, Pretoria, South Africa: +27 (0)12 452 1700.

## **Foreign Embassies in Qatar**

### **American Embassy**

United States Embassy, Doha: +974 4496 6000.

### **Canadian Embassy**

Canadian Embassy, Doha, Qatar: +974 4419 9000.

### **British Embassy**

British Embassy, Doha: +974 4496 2000.

### **Australian Embassy**

Australian Embassy in Doha, Qatar: +974 4007 8500

### **Irish Embassy**

Irish Embassy, Abu Dhabi (also responsible for Qatar): +971 (0)2 495 8200.

### **New Zealand Embassy**

New Zealand Embassy, Abu Dhabi (also responsible for Qatar): +971 2 441 1222.

### **South African Embassy**

South African Embassy, Doha: +974 4485 7111.

# Currency

The official currency is the Qatari riyal (QAR), which divides into 100 dirhams. Money can be exchanged at banks, the airport and exchange dealers. Banks are generally open Saturday to Thursday 7:30am to 1pm, and ATMs are widespread. All major credit cards are widely accepted.

## Exchange rate for 1 QAR - Qatari Rial

<b>nan</b> BMD	<b>inf</b> EUR	<b>inf</b> USD	<b>inf</b> GBP	<b>inf</b> JPY	<b>inf</b> CAD
Bermudan Dollar	Euro	U.S. Dollar	U.K. Pound Sterling	Japanese Yen	Canadian Dollar
<b>inf</b> CHF	<b>inf</b> AUD	<b>inf</b> UAH	<b>inf</b> KZT	<b>inf</b> LBP	<b>inf</b> LYD
Swiss Franc	Australian Dollar	Ukrainian Hryvnia	Kazakhstani Tenge	Lebanese Pound	Libyan Dinar
<b>inf</b> BOB	<b>nan</b> NPR	<b>nan</b> OMR	<b>inf</b> SGD	<b>inf</b> SEK	<b>nan</b> TTD
Bolivian Boliviano	Nepalese Rupee	Omani Rial	Singapore Dollar	Swedish Krona	Trinidad Tobago Dollar
<b>nan</b> VEF	<b>inf</b> DOP	<b>nan</b> HRK	<b>inf</b> MXN	<b>inf</b> XOF	<b>nan</b> PGK
Venezuelan Bolivar	Dominican Peso	Croatian Kuna	Mexican Peso	West African CFA Franc	Papua New Guinean kina
<b>nan</b> BSD	<b>nan</b> FJD	<b>nan</b> HNL	<b>inf</b> DZD	<b>nan</b> MMK	<b>nan</b> BWP
Bahamian Dollar	Fiji Dollar	Honduran Lempira	Algerian Dinar	Myanma Kyat	Botswana Pula
<b>inf</b> PEN	<b>inf</b> CLP	<b>inf</b> AMD	<b>inf</b> CZK	<b>inf</b> MDL	<b>inf</b> ISK
Peruvian Nuevo Sol	Chilean Peso	Armenia Dram	Czech Koruna	Moldova Lei	Icelandic Krona
<b>inf</b> UZS	<b>inf</b> ILS	<b>inf</b> JOD	<b>nan</b> KWD	<b>inf</b> UYU	<b>nan</b> MUR
Uzbekistan Sum	Israeli New Sheqel	Jordanian Dinar	Kuwaiti Dinar	Uruguayan Peso	Mauritian Rupee
<b>nan</b> NIO	<b>inf</b> NOK	<b>inf</b> PLN	<b>inf</b> SAR	<b>nan</b> LKR	<b>inf</b> THB
Nicaraguan Córdoba	Norwegian Krone	Polish Zloty	Saudi Riyal	Sri Lanka Rupee	Thai Baht
<b>inf</b> AED	<b>inf</b> BRL	<b>inf</b> RON	<b>inf</b> HKD	<b>inf</b> XAF	<b>inf</b> VND
U.A.E Dirham	Brazilian Real	Romanian New Leu	Hong Kong Dollar	Central African CFA Franc	Vietnamese Dong
<b>inf</b> ARS	<b>nan</b> XCD	<b>nan</b> GTQ	<b>inf</b> MAD	<b>nan</b> BHD	<b>inf</b> PAB
Argentine Peso	East Caribbean Dollar	Guatemalan Quetzal	Moroccan Dirham	Bahrain Dinar	Panamanian Balboa
<b>inf</b> AZN	<b>inf</b> COP	<b>inf</b> KGS	<b>inf</b> HUF	<b>inf</b> TJS	<b>inf</b> IDR
Azerbaijan Manat	Colombian Peso	Kyrgyzstan Som	Hungarian Forint	Tajikistan Ruble	Indonesian Rupiah
<b>inf</b> EGP	<b>inf</b> KRW	<b>inf</b> PYG	<b>inf</b> MYR	<b>inf</b> CRC	<b>inf</b> NZD
Egyptian Pound	South Korean Won	Paraguayan Guaraní	Malaysian Ringgit	Costa Rican Colón	New Zealand Dollar
<b>inf</b> PKR	<b>inf</b> RUB	<b>inf</b> ZAR	<b>inf</b> TND	<b>nan</b> BBD	<b>inf</b> BGN
Pakistani Rupee	Russian Rouble	South African Rand	Tunisian Dinar	Barbadian Dollar	Bulgarian Lev
<b>inf</b> TRY	<b>inf</b> PHP	<b>inf</b> TWD	<b>inf</b> NGN	<b>nan</b> XPF	<b>nan</b> GHS
Turkish Lira	Philippine Peso	New Taiwan Dollar	Nigerian Naira	CFP Franc	Ghanaian Cedi
<b>nan</b> JMD	<b>nan</b> ANG	<b>nan</b> BND	<b>inf</b> RSD	<b>inf</b> CNY	<b>inf</b> DKK
Jamaican Dollar	Neth. Antillean Guilder	Brunei Dollar	Serbian Dinar	Chinese Yuan	Danish Krone
<b>inf</b> TMT	<b>inf</b> INR				
New Turkmenistan Manat	Indian Rupee				

## Port of Call - Doha

Nestled in the Persian Gulf, Doha is the capital of Qatar. It is a city that embraces modernity, while still keeping in touch with its Moorish and Bedouin roots. The Doha port (Hamad Port) is the largest seaport in the country. It is located close to the city and near to the popular Doha Corniche and promenade area.

## Shopping in Doha

Visitors to Qatar will find it difficult to choose where to shop. Doha has a selection of top quality malls supplying everything from gifts and mementos to couture wear and branded goods. The largest mall in Doha is the recently completed Mall of Qatar, with other mammoth malls including City Centre Mall, which, contrary to its name, is located on the outskirts of the city in Al Dafna. Other popular and well-stocked malls include Villaggio Mall on Al Haab Street, Landmark Mall and Hyatt Plaza. The traditional markets, or souqs, offer a completely different experience. Shoppers will have to don their best poker face and prepare to bargain hard for the items of their choice. Souq Waqif, which is conveniently located just opposite the port, is the best market for souvenirs, textiles and carpets.

**Best Buy:** Saffron and textiles.

## Dining in Doha

Al Hamra - A fusion of Middle-Eastern and European cuisine. Isaan - Serving some of the best Thai food in the Arabian Gulf, tapas style! Bukhara - This top Indian restaurant serves a selection of aromatic curries and tantalising kebabs.

**Best Dish:** Machbous, which is a fragrantly spiced rice with meat and/or seafood. This dish is usually served on a platter in the centre of the table.



# Overview of the Attractions in Qatar

# Public Holidays in Qatar

	2023	2024
Eid al-Fitr (end of Ramadan)	Sun. April 21 to Tue. April 23	Wed. April 10 to Fri. April 12
National Day	Wed. December 18	Wed. December 18
Eid al-Adha (Feast of the Sacrifice)	Thu. June 27 to Sat. June 29	Sat. June 15 to Mon. June 17
Sport Day	Wed. February 14	Tue. February 13