



Qatar

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Best for Culture

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Why Go?

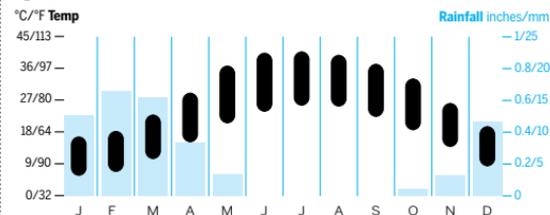
Ask the Qataris, Bedouin roots notwithstanding, what they are most proud of and they will undoubtedly say Doha. And indeed you can see why: the modern capital with its spectacular tapering towers, elegant corniche and extravagant malls, makes Doha arguably the finest stop over in the Gulf.

But there's more to Qatar than a shopping spree. The whole country, with its heritage souqs, world-class Museum of Islamic Art, and lyrical sand dunes, offers an excellent introduction to the Arab world but without the tensions often associated with the Middle East.

The success of this booming nation is more than just skin deep. Rapid economic expansion, barely brooked by the global recession, international sports tournaments, and Education City: these are some of the many hallmarks of Qatar's sophistication. Chances are, if you spend a night in the vibrant city of Doha, you'll be lobbying the relatives to stay a whole lot longer in Qatar.

When to Go

Qatar



Nov-Mar Enjoy a break from the intense heat and humidity of summer.

Apr Cheer on the favourite at the Emir's Cup event – camel racing at its best.

Jun Watch the grand prix of power boat racing slice up the waters of Doha Bay.

AT A GLANCE

- ➔ **Currency** Qatari riyal (QR)
- ➔ **Mobile Phones** SIM cards widely available
- ➔ **Money** ATMs widespread; credit cards widely accepted
- ➔ **Visas** Available on arrival for many nationalities

Fast Facts

- ➔ **Capital** Doha
- ➔ **Country code** ☎974
- ➔ **Language** Arabic (English widely spoken)
- ➔ **Official name** Qatar
- ➔ **Population** 1,699,435

Exchange Rates

The riyal is pegged to the US dollar. For current exchange rates see www.xe.com.

Australia	A\$1	QR3.79
Bahrain	BD1	QR9.66
Euro zone	€1	QR4.66
Kuwait	KD1	QR12.92
Oman	OR1	QR9.45
Saudi Arabia	SR1	QR0.97
UAE	Dh1	QR0.99
UK	UK£1	QR4.43
USA	US\$1	QR3.64
Yemen	YR100	QR1.70

Resources

- ➔ **Al-Jazeera** (www.aljazeera.com) Arab-world equivalent of the BBC
- ➔ **Experience Qatar** (www.experienceqatar.com) Official website of Qatar

Daily Costs

Qatar is a relatively expensive destination. With the few budget hotels being swept away in the name of development, accommodation is hard to find below US\$100. Factoring in cheap options for eating (around US\$10) and the cost of a sight or an activity, a minimum daily cost with transport comes to around US\$150. This rises to US\$230 if staying in midrange hotels and for a top-end hotel with car hire, US\$400 is nearer the mark.

ITINERARIES

Qatar Stopover

Spend a morning absorbing the best of Doha in a promenade along the **corniche**, watching the city's stellar skyline dance in the heat. Use the afternoon in cooler contemplation at the **Museum of Islamic Arts**, Doha's priceless treasure house. Seek out silks and spices for sale in **Souq Waqif**, and admire the feathered plumage on display in the neighbouring **Falcon Souq**. Dine at one of the souq's teeming restaurants.

Three Days

After day one exploring modern central Doha, recharge on day two by the beach at **InterContinental Doha** before a sunset **dhow trip**. On day three hire a car and tour the peninsula, stopping off at **Al-Khor** for lunch at Al-Sultan Beach Resort. Head north to explore the ancient **rock carvings** at Jebel Jassassiyeh and end the day at **Al-Zubara**, visiting this far-flung fort.

For Expats

Camp out under the escarpment at **Bir Zekreet** and search for a pearl on a shore full of washed-up oysters. Cast an eye over the historic interior at **Umm Salal Mohammed**, or enjoy some R & R at **Sealine Beach Resort**. Stay overnight at the enchanting inland sea of **Khor al-Adaid** and sleep on a magic carpet of sand.

Essential Food & Drink

- ➔ **Makbus** Rice and spices with chicken, lamb or fish in a rich sauce.
- ➔ **Grilled Lobster** Local crayfish are a popular favourite.
- ➔ **Khabees** Dates in a variety of sizes, colours and states of ripeness.
- ➔ **Tap water** Safe to drink although most people stick to bottled water.
- ➔ **Alcohol** Available only in top-end hotel restaurants and bars.
- ➔ **Coffee** Traditionally served pale and spiked with cardamon or dark, strong and with plenty of sugar.