

USEFUL INFORMATION WHEN VISITING QATAR

About Qatar

Qatar is a peninsula of 11,437 sq. km. located halfway down the west coast of the Arabian Gulf. Latest estimates put Qatar's population at more than 1.5 million. In 1825, the capital, Doha was founded. It serves as the seat of government which is ruled by H.H. Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani.

Business and Shopping Hours

The working week in Qatar is from Sunday to Thursday, with Friday (the holy day for Muslims) and usually Saturday off.

Government departments operate from 6h30 to 13h30, Sunday to Thursday with Friday and Saturday off.

Commercial offices tend to have split opening times, roughly 7h30 to noon and 15h30 to 19h30.

Shop timings vary but are generally 8h30 to 12h30 and 16h00 to 21h00.

Shopping malls tend to be open all day 9h00 to 23h00. Malls are open from 16h00 to 23h00 on Fridays.

Climate

Temperatures in Qatar (December): 15°C - 24°C, 59° F - 75° F

Common Courtesies in Qatar

- Dress modestly when in public. Avoid exposing the knees, shoulders, cleavage and stomach. Normal swimwear including bikinis is acceptable on the beach or at the pool.
- When being introduced to women wait for the woman to offer her hand. If the hand is not offered then do not shake hands.
- While it is acceptable to cross legs, showing the sole of the foot or unknowingly pointing it at a person is considered an insult.
- Public displays of affection between men and women are discouraged.
- Exercise discretion when photographing local residents.
- Driving under the influence of alcohol is a serious offence.
- There is a zero-tolerance policy to drugs.

Customs Regulation

The import of alcohol or pork in any form is strictly forbidden. Alcohol can be purchased by departing travellers only.

Currency Exchange and Banking

The unit of currency is the Qatar Riyal (QAR) which is divided into 100 Dirhams. The Qatar Riyal has a fixed exchange rate against the US dollar of US\$1 = QAR3.65.

Banks are generally open from 7h30 to 13h00 Saturday to Thursday. ATMs are extensively available.

Dining and Entertainment

International cuisine including Arabic, Western, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Thai and Persian food is available. Friday or Saturday brunch at one of the city's hotels is popular with both locals and expatriates. Most international hotels serve alcohol, but it should not be consumed in public. Hotels bars may feature live music or discos. You are required to produce either your passport or Qatar ID in order to gain entry to a bar or nightclub in Qatar.

Drinking Water

It is not advised to drink tap water. Bottled water is widely available.

Electric Current

The supply of electricity is 220-240 Volts AC, 50 cycles with square UK-style three-pin 13-amp sockets.

Emergency and Important Telephone Numbers

Emergency Services (fire, police and ambulance):	999
Worldwide Emergency Number: (GSM User outside coverage area)	112
Doha International Airport Arrivals:	4465 6087
Doha International Airport Departures:	4465 6347
Flight Information System:	4462 2999
General Enquiries:	4465 6347
Karwa Taxi (bright turquoise cars):	4458 8888

International Dialing Code

To call another country from Qatar: Dial 00 followed by the country code and the telephone number.

To call Qatar from overseas: Dial +974 (the code for Qatar) and then the telephone number (8 digits).

Using your mobile in Qatar: Uses GSM technology. Qtel and Vodafone offer flexible package options.

Languages

The official language in Qatar is Arabic. English is widely spoken and understood.

Religion

Islam, the prominent religion in Qatar, is not only a religion; it is also a way of life. It proclaims faith and sets forth precepts. It also prescribes order for individuals and society, codifying law, family relationships, business, etiquette, dress, food, and personal hygiene. It is important to behave and dress in a discreet manner and to respect the host country's way of life.

Time Zone

GMT +3 hours

Tipping

Service charge is not included in the bill. Tip if you feel the service deserves it. 10% is appropriate.

Transport

Limousine and taxi services are available in Doha at all times. To book through the national taxi company Karwa, call 4458 8888. Please note bookings should be made several hours in advance.