

Qatar - Travel Facts and Figures

Location: Middle East

Comprising an area of 11,437 sq km (4,416 sq mi), the State of Qatar consists of a peninsula projecting northward into the Arabian Gulf, extending about 160 km (100 mi) North-South and 90 km (55 mi) East-West. It is bordered on the South by the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia and has a total boundary length of 623 km (387 mi), of which 563 km (350 mi) is coastline. Qatar also includes a number of islands, of which the most important is Halul.

National flag

National emblem

Geographic coordinates: 25° 30' N 51° 15' E

Area: 11,437 sq km

Highest point: Qurayn Abu al Bawl at 103 metres

Population: 1.530.000 (estimated, 2008 census)

Population density: 74 / sq km

Capital: Doha, geographic coordinates 25° 18' N 51° 31' E

Population: 998,651 (2008)

Major towns: Qatar is administratively divided into ten municipalities, which are Doha, AL Rayyan, AL Wakra, UmStal, AL Khor, AL Shamal, AL Ghuwairiyah, AL Jemaliya, Jeryan AL Batna and Mesaieed.

Local time: GMT + 3 hours

Life expectancy: 77 years

GDP - per capita: the highest in the world \$90,300

Oil reserves: Qatar has proven recoverable oil reserves of 15.2 billion barrels. Dukhan, with its 2.2 billion barrels of oil, is the largest field.

Gas reserves: Qatar has the third largest reserves in the world, which was discovered in 1971, is the largest non-associated gas field in the world and contains 900 trillion cubic feet of gas. Gas is exported in the form of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG).

Visa: Qatar grants tourist visas at border points for the nationals of more than 33 countries including USA, Canada, Iceland, West European countries, some East European countries, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, South Korea, Brunei, Australia and New Zealand, besides the nationals of the GCC countries. Visit visas for the residents of the GCC countries and their companions are issued at border points, while entry visas for businessmen coming from places other than the countries mentioned above need to be arranged beforehand.

Visitors on tourist visas are required to use Qatar Airways to enter the country. The passport section at Doha international airport can issue renewable 14-day tourist visas in 24 hours for all visitors to Qatar with the exception of travel documents holders. Such visitors should have their next of kin living in Qatar, and they are not required to have residence permits in one of the GCC countries in order to get a tourist visa. This arrangement goes in line with the policy of openness currently prevailing in various fields in the State of Qatar.

Safety: Qatar is one of the safest places in the world to visit.

Currency: The riyal (QR) is the official currency of Qatar, which is divided into 100 dirhams. The Exchange parity has been set at the fixed rate of US \$ = 3.65QR's. See Qatar currency converter

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

Customs: The following goods may be imported, a reasonable amount of tobacco and perfume for personal use.

Prohibited Imports: No alcohol, narcotics, pork-related products or pornography may be brought through customs.

Climate: arid; mild, pleasant winters; very hot, humid summers. Qatar is characterized by a hot summer starting from June till Middle of September. Winter is warm, with little rainfall. It starts from December till the end of February. The weather is generally pleasant during March, April, May, October and November. Drinking: It's hot in Qatar, drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration.

Clothing: Lightweight summer clothing in cottons or blends is ideal for most of the year. Sweaters, a light jacket or a shawl may be needed for the cooler evenings.

"The State of Qatar is a conservative Arab country and has its own traditions and customs derived from the originality of its history and people brought up on Islamic religious values. So please respect these customs in your dressings. If you are here on visit or business, obey the laws of this country and your respect to these laws will help you to avoid violations".

Religion: Islam is the official religion; other religions are also respected. **Ramadan:** Ramadan is the holy month of fasting when Muslims abstain from eating, drinking and smoking during daylight hours. As a sign of respect, visitors are also required to refrain from these activities in public between sunrise and sunset. **Public holidays in Qatar 2015**

18 Jul	Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan)
3 Sep	Independence Day
23 Sep	Eid al-Adha (Feast of the Sacrifice)
18 Dec	National Day

Friday is the general day of worship and a public holiday.

Weekend: Government, schools and commercial Friday and Saturday.

Electricity: The electrical system is based on 240 volts / 50 Hz. The most frequently used UK plugs.

Alcohol: The importation and consumption of alcohol is strictly regulated in Qatar.

Credit cards: All major credit cards are accepted, as are travellers cheques in main hotels, stores and larger shops, but in traditional souks, cash is mostly used and bargaining power is increased with the ready availability of currency. ATM machines are available.

Business hours: Government offices are open from 7am - 2pm daily from Saturday to Wednesday. Banks are open from 7.30am - 12am Saturday to Wednesday and to 11.30am only on Thursday. Commercial offices working hours vary considerably, but are normally open from 8.00 to 13.00 hours and from 3.30pm - 6.30pm. During Ramadan, the month of fasting, restricted business hours are observed.

Health: a variety of bottled mineral water is widely available. Most hotels have medical help available and there is a modern medical infrastructure in terms of private and government medical facilities.

Hotels: Accommodation in Qatar is very high standard and most of the world's top hotel chains run five-star hotels in Qatar. There are also a number of excellent locally run properties suitable for both tourists and business travellers. Several of the hotels are outstanding examples of modern architecture. Swimming pools, tennis courts and fully equipped health centres are the norm. Most waterfront hotels have excellent beaches and extensive watersports facilities.

Facilities for the physically challenged: Most hotels and public places provide facilities and make special arrangements for physically challenged visitors.

Social conventions: Muslim religious laws should be observed. Women are expected to dress modestly and men should dress formally for most occasions. Alcohol is tolerated, with non-Muslims allowed to drink alcohol in the city's bars, restaurants, clubs and hotels. Smoking is the same as in Europe and in most cases it is obvious where not to smoke, except during Ramadan when it is illegal to eat, drink or smoke in public.

Photography: Normal tourist photography is acceptable but it is considered offensive to photograph Muslim women. It is also courteous to ask permission before photographing men. In general, photographs of government buildings or military installations should not be taken.

Mobile telephony is widespread and of excellent quality. The system used is GSM. MMS, WEP and GSRM services are also on hand, and 3G services are available.

Traffic system: Driving in Qatar is on the right-hand side.

Getting around: The best way to get around in Doha is by car. Qatar has good network of roads and highways.

Getting there: The Qatar Airways is one of the fastest growing airlines in the world. Qatar Airways connects Doha to more than 100 destinations worldwide.

Airport: Doha International Airport (DOH) accommodates over 35 passenger airlines and is currently undergoing an expansion programme to cater to the growing number of visitors to Qatar.

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