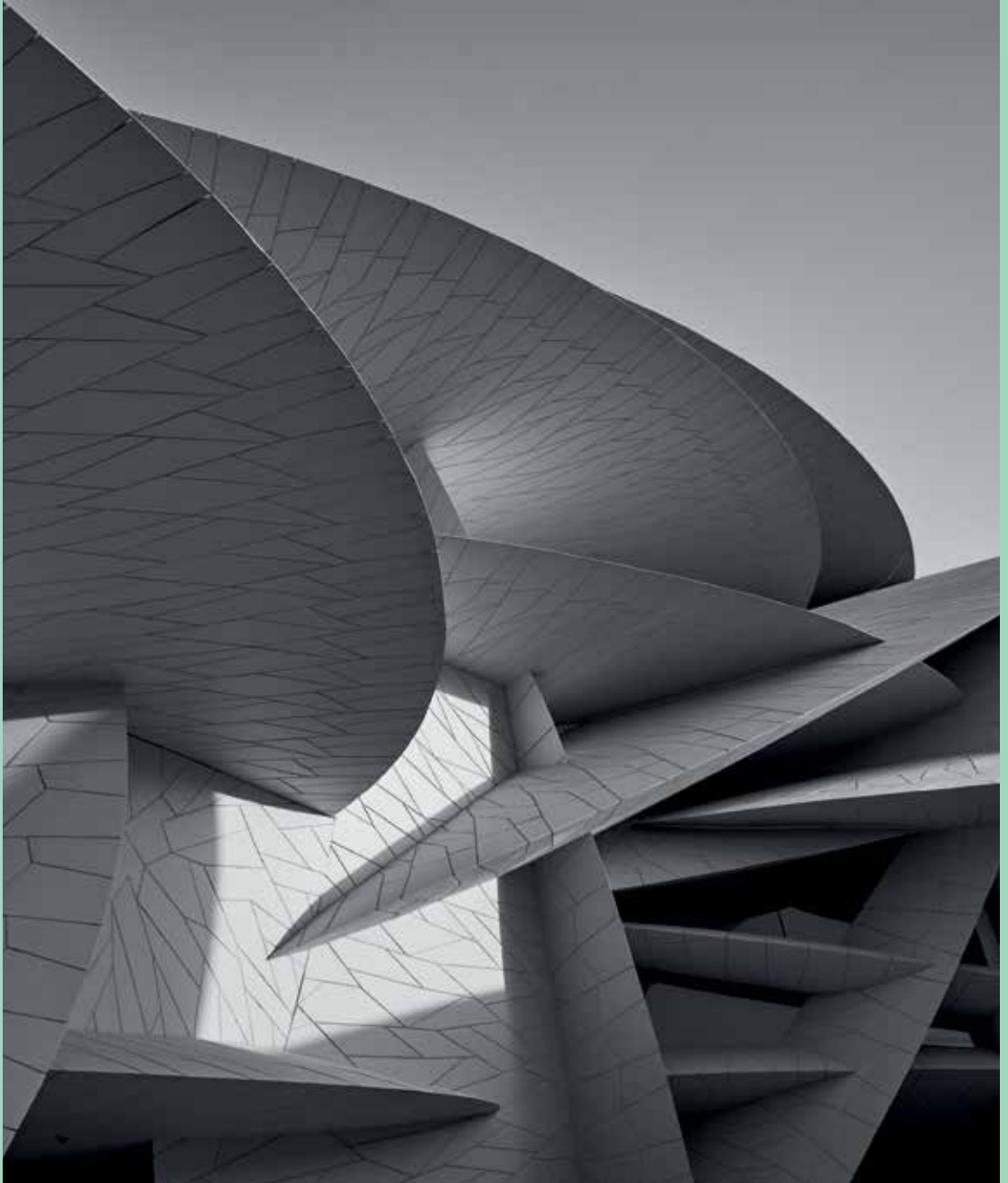


Qatar Now

A traveller's guide to the country, culture and people.



Issue 1.

2022

Qatar Now

A traveller's guide to the country, culture and people.

For more information

Website visitqatar.qa

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Qatar Now Issue 1 2022

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Front cover: The iconic National Museum of Qatar in Doha.

We have taken the utmost care in compiling this guide, however, we cannot accept responsibility for any errors or changes herein.

Dear Reader,

Welcome to “*Qatar Now*”, an exciting new publication showcasing the vibrant, rich and constantly evolving Qatari scene.

Located in the heart of the Middle East, Qatar is a unique destination that embraces modernity while remaining steeped in tradition. This publication is your guide to some of the many cultural masterpieces Qatar boasts, which can be seen on a visit to one of the country’s museums or a stroll around its outdoor installations and inspiring architecture, or even experienced inside one of its restaurants, representing a myriad of culinary schools.

This is an exciting time in Qatar. In less than a year, we will welcome the world for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™. An estimated one million plus visitors will enjoy the first World Cup to be held in the Middle East, across eight state-of-the-art stadia that draw inspiration from our heritage.

Qatar is a gateway to the world, with around half the world’s population within a five-hour flight radius. From the time visitors board their Qatar Airways flight, through to their time at Hamad International Airport, they experience the five-star service and hospitality that has repeatedly won our flagship airline and airport a host of “best of” awards.

We invite you to visit Qatar soon to learn about our story and experience our unique tourism offerings. Until then, we are pleased to offer you a taste of our country through *Qatar Now*.

Akbar Al Baker
Chairman
Qatar Tourism

مرحباً بكم في "قطر الآن"، إصدار جديد ومميز يعبر عن ثقافة قطر النابضة بالحياة والمتغيرة والمتطورة باستمرار.

تقع دولة قطر في قلب الشرق الأوسط، وهي وجهة فريدة تحتضن الحداثة بينما تظل متمسكة بالعراقة والأصالة. يعد هذا الإصدار دليل شامل يعرض بعض الروائع الثقافية العديدة التي تفتخر بها قطر، والتي تضم الأعمال الفنية القيمة والتصاميم الهندسية والمعمارية المدهشة والتي يمكن رؤيتها عند زيارة أحد متاحف الدولة أو خلال جولة حول منشآتها، أو حتى خلال التمتع بأطباق شهية داخل أحد مطاعمها، والتي تضم عدداً من مدارس الطهي العالمية.

إننا في غضون أقل من عام واحد، سنرحب بالعالم للمشاركة في أحد أهم البطولات العالمية وهي بطولة كأس العالم FIFA قطر ٢٠٢٢™. والتي سيستمتع بها ما يقارب ١,٥ مليون زائر، البطولة الأولى من نوعها التي تقام في الشرق الأوسط، في ثمانية ملاعب ذات التصميم الحديث والمستوحى من التراث.

قطر هي بوابة العبور للعالم، حيث يمكن لحوالي نصف سكان العالم السفر بنطاق رحلة لمدة خمس ساعات في الطائرة عبر قطر، كما يمكنهم الاستمتاع بالخدمات والضيافة ذات الخمس نجوم التي تقدمها الخطوط الجوية القطرية ومطار حمد الدولي والحائزة على أفضل الجوائز.

ندعوكم لزيارة دولة قطر والتعرف على قصتنا وكرم ضيافتنا وعروضنا المميزة. حتى ذلك الحين، يسعدنا أن نقدم لكم لمحة عن بلادنا من خلال إصدار "قطر الآن".

أكبر الباكر

رئيس قطر للسياسة



Qatar's Arabian horse stables at Souq Waqif with the West Bay city skyline in the background.

Qatar's history stretches forwards and backwards at every turn. There's spectacular architecture everywhere, from public art galleries to skyscrapers and minarets. Alongside the new, reminders of the old ways of life are in evidence everywhere, among the ruins and in living traditions. And in the desert, vast shifting sand dunes change with the wind, perpetually altering the landscape, but always giving way to azure seas.

Qatar is a compact country on a peninsula in the Arabian Gulf, but the possibilities within are limitless.

Just a few decades ago, Doha was a small town in the desert. Now, it's a metropolis. But that's just the surface. The country is rich with history, art and industry.

This year, Qatar will host the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ and all eyes will turn to this overachieving peninsula. This publication seeks to show people Qatar today. Where to eat, where to play and where to explore.

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Qatar

At around 90 km across, and 160 km north to south, Qatar is compact and easy to navigate. Hire a car and leave Doha, and you can reach anywhere within a couple of hours.

The desert landscape is spectacular on the country's west coast, particularly in Ras Abrouq, where unusual limestone formations make for a dramatic terrain. At nearby Zekreet, American artist Richard Serra's world-renowned sculpture *East-West/West-East* emerges breathtakingly from the desert sands.

In the northern city of Al Khor, you'll find Al Bayt Stadium, where the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ will kick off for 60,000 spectators from around the world. In the south of the country, past 30 km of rugged sand dunes, you'll find Khor Al Udaid, also known as the Inland Sea. Centuries ago, this body of water was a haven for pirates—now it's a popular camping and swimming spot.

Speaking of which, you'll find beautiful sights all around Qatar's coast, from Fuwairit Beach, where, in breeding season, you can spot rare hawksbill sea turtles, to the lush greenery of the Al Thakira Mangroves, a popular kayaking destination.

And there's plenty more. Head to visitqatar.qa for more highlights and events.

Art and culture

1. Dahl Al Misfir
2. Al Zubara Fort & Archaeological Site
3. Ras Abrouq Rock Formations
4. Richard Serra: *East-West/West-East*, Zekreet
5. Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani Museum

Sun, sea and sand

6. Banana Island Resort Doha by Anantara
7. Fuwairit Beach
8. Khor Al Udaid (the Inland Sea)
9. Sealine Beach

Sport and adventure

10. Al Thakira Mangroves
11. Al Janoub Stadium
12. Al Bayt Stadium

Wellness and spas

13. Al Messila, a Luxury Collection Resort & Spa, Doha
14. Hilton Salwa Beach Resort & Villas

Fashion and shopping

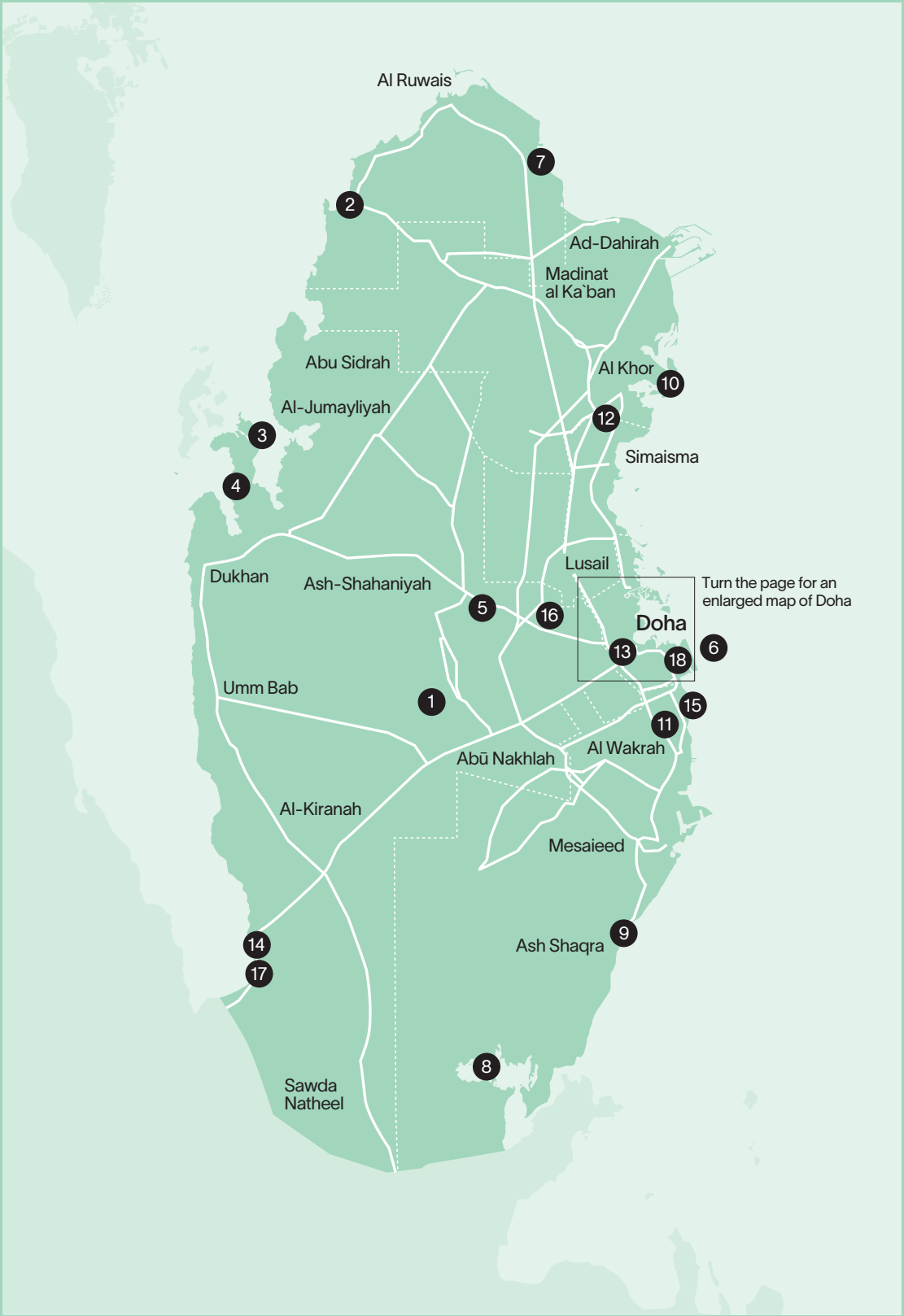
15. Souq Al Wakra
16. Mall of Qatar

Family and kids

17. Desert Falls Water & Adventure Park

Popular attractions

18. Hamad International Airport



Doha

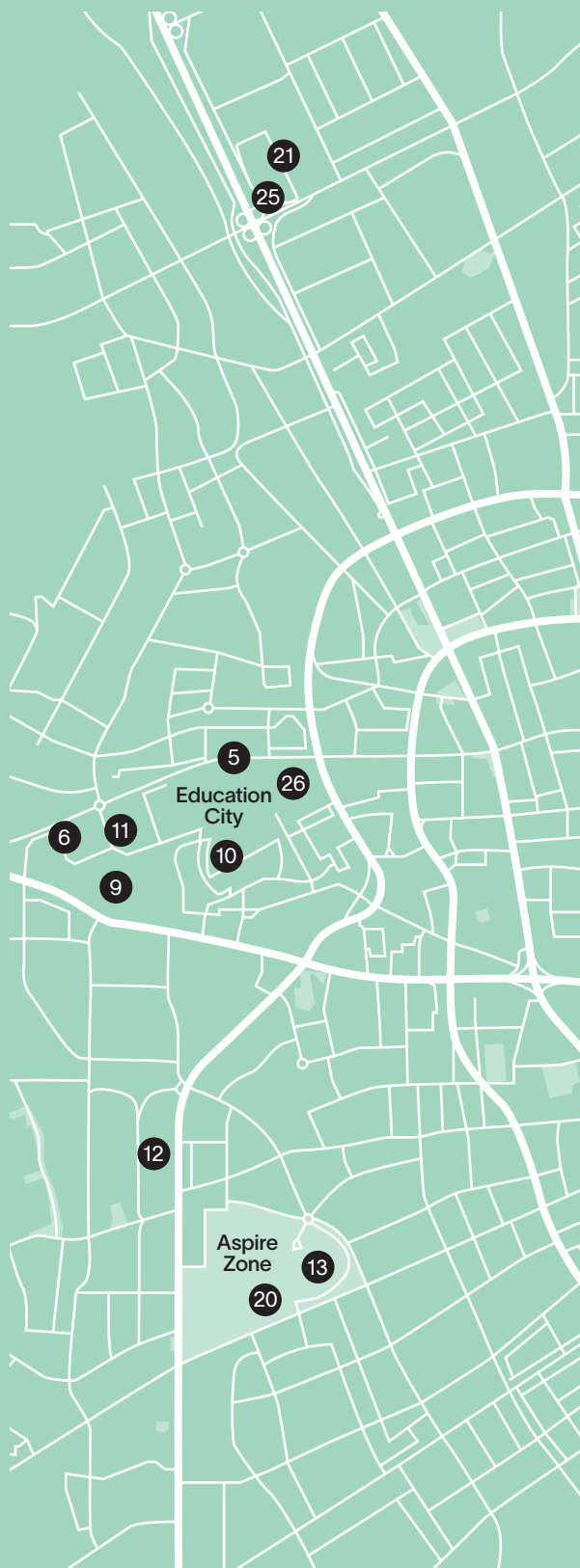
You could spend days in each of Doha's distinct neighbourhoods and not run out of things to do.

On the Corniche, overlooking the Arabian Gulf, you'll find some of the country's finest museums, like the National Museum of Qatar and the Museum of Islamic Art. Nearby, Souq Waqif is the city's traditional heart, a bustling market full of food, pearls and gold. Msheireb Downtown Doha, a sustainable downtown regeneration project, is a breezy, pedestrian-friendly neighbourhood full of hotels, restaurants and boutiques, and it's also home to Doha's burgeoning Design District.

North of the Corniche, the skyscrapers of West Bay host some of the city's best hotels, dining and shopping. Head to Katara Cultural Village for the city's community hub, featuring Katara Art Centre, a Greek-inspired amphitheatre and a stretch of public beach. The Pearl, built entirely on reclaimed land on the waters of the Arabian Gulf, is a luxurious destination for shopping and dining.

Inland, Education City is home to university campuses, the city library and some of the country's most impressive architecture. And Aspire Zone is the country's home for sport, featuring world class facilities for football, swimming and many more sports, as well as the city's main stadium, Khalifa Stadium.

For more detail, head to visitqatar.qa.





Helpful information

Safety

Qatar is an extremely safe country. In fact, in online database *Numbeo's* 2022 rankings, Qatar was rated as the safest country in the world. You can travel safely and with peace of mind to Qatar.

Helpful hints

Some things are done a little bit differently in Qatar. The weekend, for instance, is Friday and Saturday.

Prayers take place five times a day. You'll hear the call to prayer coming from speakers across the city at dawn (*Fajr*), midday/noon (*Dhuhr*), mid-afternoon (*Asr*), sunset (*Magrib*) and nightfall (*Isba*). The exact times vary according to the position of the sun.

Additionally, on Friday mornings between 10am and midday, all business and commercial activity closes for two hours for Friday prayers.

Things you need to know

Qatar is a country with strong social traditions and a diverse melting pot.

Dressing conservatively is recommended in Qatar, especially in historic neighbourhoods and places of worship, like wearing clothing that covers shoulders, arms and legs.

Qatar is a warm and friendly country, and you will come across many people who will greet you with a smile and wish you well.

Alcohol is served in licensed establishments such as hotels and bars to those over 21 years of age. However, public intoxication is not acceptable. Use or possession of illegal drugs is also strictly prohibited.

During Ramadan, it is appreciated if you are respectful of those fasting when eating and drinking in public.

Bargaining in souqs is encouraged. A bit of haggling is part of the market tradition.

Language

Arabic is the official language of the country. English is widely spoken as a second language.

You don't need to learn Arabic to get around, but a few key phrases here and there will show respect for the culture.

Try these:

Good morning	<i>Sabah al khair</i>
Good afternoon / evening	<i>Massa al khair</i>
Goodbye (go in peace)	<i>Ma'a salaamah</i>
Peace be upon you	<i>Assalam a'laykum</i>
Thank you	<i>Shukran</i>
Please	<i>Min fadlak / min fadlik*</i>
I'm sorry	<i>Ana mutaassef / ana mutaasefa*</i>
Congratulations	<i>Mabrook</i>
What time is it?	<i>A-sa'a kam?</i>
When do you open / close?	<i>Mata taftahoon / tosakkiroon?</i>
How much is this?	<i>Kam qeemtah?</i>

**When speaking as a female, or to a female*

Getting around

In Doha, the easiest way to get around is the new metro system. There are three lines covering most of the city, with extensions on the way. It's fast, safe, cheap and clean.

There's also a comprehensive bus service, and taxis (as well as ride-sharing services like Uber and Careem) are common and affordable.

Beyond Doha, renting a car is an affordable and practical way to travel. Petrol is cheap, everything is within a few hours' drive and the roads are excellent.

Accessibility

Download the Accessible Qatar app to your smartphone for information about accessibility and facilities across the country.

For more information on planning your trip, including what's on, what's open and what's nearby, scan here to download the Visit Qatar app.



Itineraries

24 hours in Qatar

You've got a single day in Qatar. What to do?

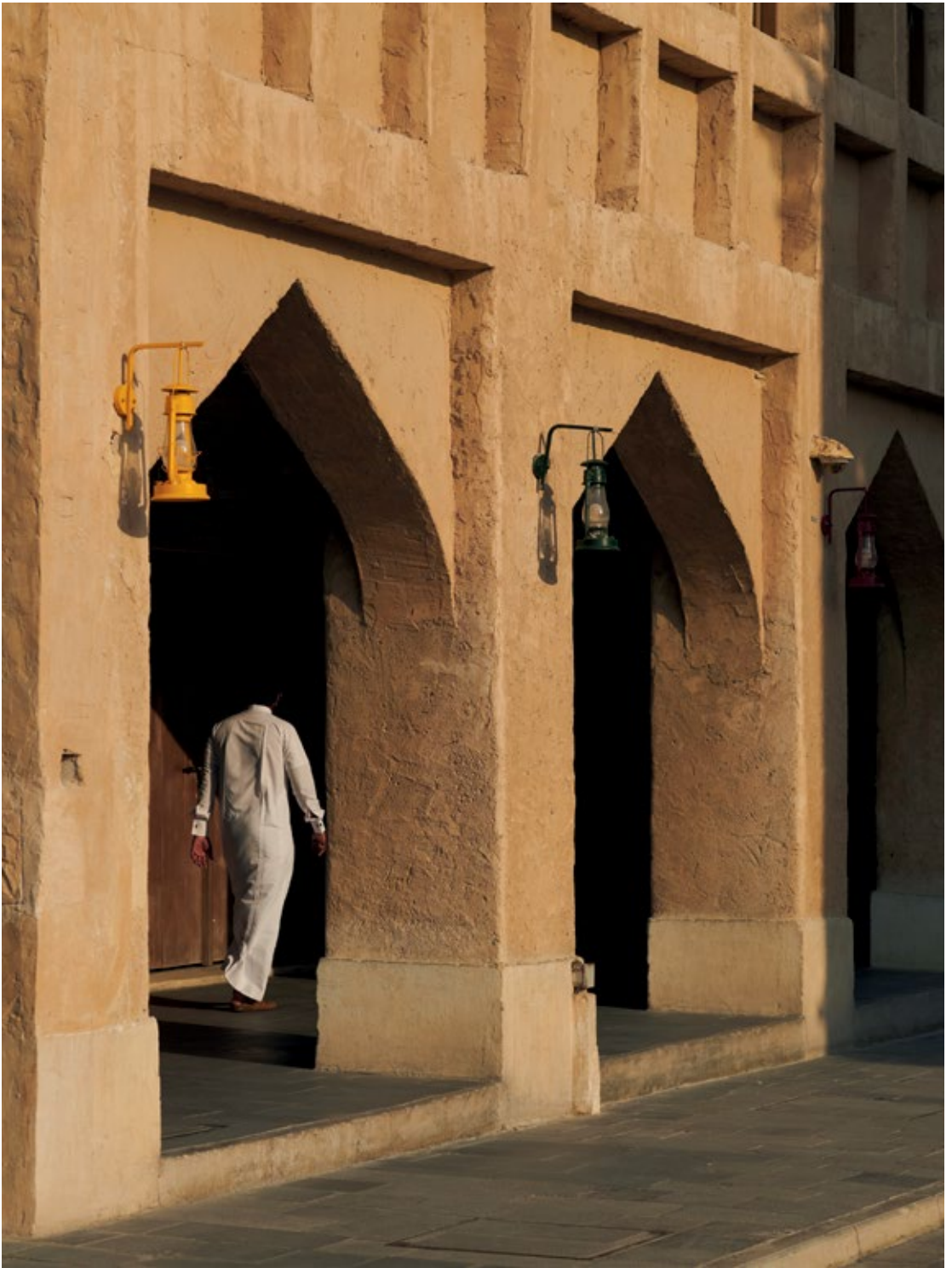
Start with breakfast. Why not venture out to try some local cuisine? In the heart of Souq Waqif, Shay Al Shoomos is a popular spot with locals. The first restaurant in Qatar to be owned and operated by a Qatari woman, it's known for its flavoursome, homely vibe and authentic Qatari food. Or, venture over to The Pearl where you're spoilt with countless cafes and diners. After breakfast, take a walk through the marina and nearby "Little Venice" with its canals and brightly coloured residences.

Next, make your way to Katara Cultural Village. Explore the collection of outdoor sculptures and artwork, the Amphitheatre, mosques, and perhaps have a quick swim at the public beach before a cafe stop at Boho Social, with its sweeping views across West Bay and The Pearl. The National Museum of Qatar and the Museum of Islamic Art are a great way to learn a little about Qatar's culture and history. The National Museum building itself is one of the finest in Doha (a strong field), designed by French architect Jean Nouvel to resemble a desert rose. Inside, you'll learn about the country's nature and wildlife, the history of trading and pearling, and the huge cultural shift of the last few decades. The Museum of Islamic Art is a masterpiece of the late Chinese American Architect I. M. Pei, and is one of the world's premiere institutions of Islamic art.

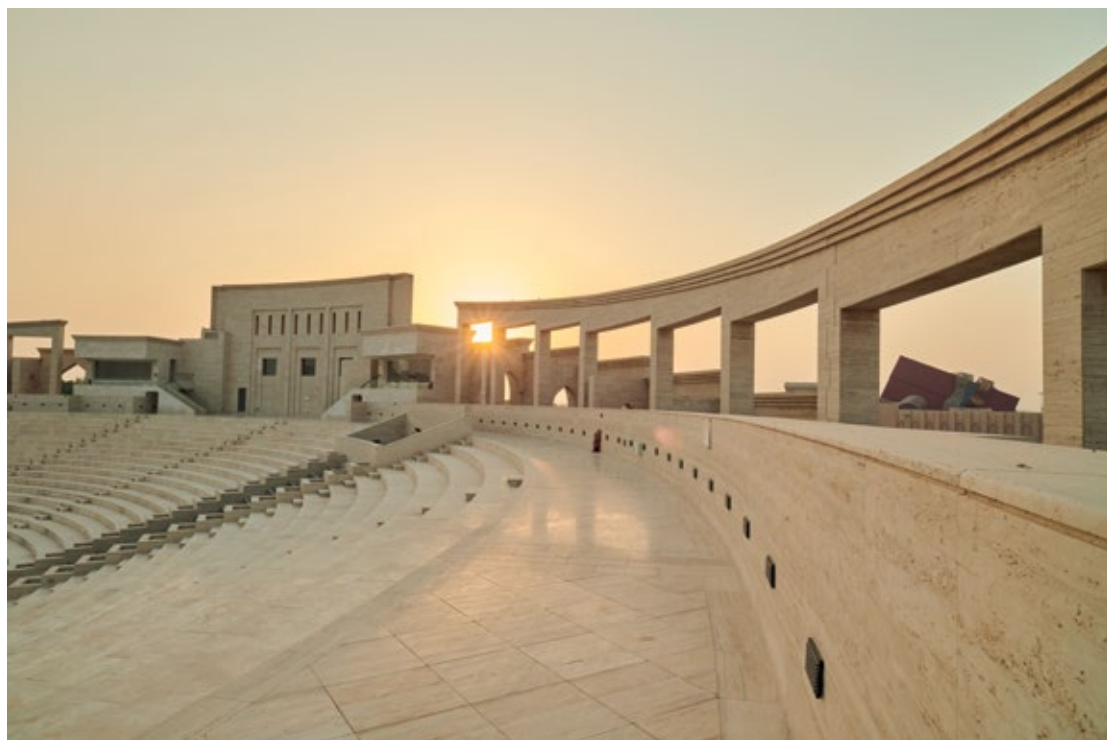
By now, the markets of Souq Waqif will be waking up. It's a short trip from the museums. Explore the laneways and stalls, try some dates and a spiced karak tea, pick up a few souvenirs and enjoy the timeless traditional atmosphere.

Sunset at Sora, level 21 at the Park Hyatt Doha is a must. Taking in the sweeping vista of the corniche, where old meets new.

Then, enjoy dinner at one of the city's many fine-dining options, such as Nobu, Hakkasan, or B-lounge. Or head back to Souq Waqif for something more traditional.



Explore the many sights, sounds and colours at Qatar's culturally significant Souq Waqif.



Clockwise from top left: Sunset over the Katara Amphitheatre. A chef at Nobu prepares their outstanding sashimi. Dune bashing en route to Khor Al Udaid (the Inland Sea). Falcons perched at the Falcon Souq. Chef Shams Al-Qassabi prepares her signature dishes at renowned cafe Shay Al Shoomos.





Clockwise from top: Brunch, lunch or dinner at Boho Social, one of Qatar's favourite waterside restaurants. A lady and her cute dogs out for an afternoon stroll in Al Bidda Park. A young girl exploring Banana Island, a perfect day trip for beautiful beaches, pools and other family activities.



48 hours in Qatar

You've got the opportunity to slow down a bit and take in the sights.

On your second day, get out of town. You could hire a car—Qatar is 160 km north to south and 90 km across, and you can get anywhere in a couple of hours. In the morning, head south to the Inland Sea. The only way to get here is by driving off-road over many kilometres of shifting sand dunes, by four-wheel drive or by hired dune buggy, so hold on tight.

Back in town, grab a coffee at MIA Park and walk along Doha's waterfront before checking out the Museum of Islamic Art, home to 14 centuries of Islamic art and artefacts. Next, take a Hop-On-Hop-Off Doha Bus tour, which offers an efficient way to take in the sights.

Then, find a spot for dinner. Qatari cuisine tonight. Make your way to SMAT, known for its Khaleeji and Qatari fusion dishes. Try the hummus. Then head back to Souq Waqif. It comes alive at night.

72 hours in Qatar

Go deeper.

Head off-road and explore Zekreet in the country's west, where the desert landscape has eroded into fascinating formations, and American artist Richard Serra has created an installation of four towering steel plinths in the sand titled *East-West / West-East*.

Alternatively, head north to one of the country's many beaches. Fuwairit for instance, a remote and pristine spot just an hour north, to take a moment in the azure sea, or if you're feeling adventurous, try kayaking in the Al Thakira Mangroves.

Spend an afternoon at one of the city's spa resorts, like Al Messila, a Luxury Collection Resort & Spa, Doha and get pampered in the midst of a natural oasis.

For dinner, head to Bayt Sharq, serving Qatari cuisine in one of the oldest houses in the city.

For more exciting itineraries, scan the QR code below.



What's on

Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams

This retrospective exhibition looks at 70 years of iconic couture from Christian Dior and the illustrious couturiers who succeeded him.

M7 Msheireb
Until 30/3/22

Virgil Abloh: Figures of Speech

Celebrated artist Virgil Abloh, who passed away in November last year, left a body of work spanning genres and media, from visual art to music and fashion. This show provides a complete overview of the incredible range of Virgil's talent and influence.

Fire Station: Artists in Residence
Until 31/3/22

Drive-in Cinema in Lusail (Ajyal)

Presented by Doha Film Institute, this ever-popular outdoor cinema offers a series of family-friendly films to watch under the stars.

Lusail
Until 31/3/22

Jeff Koons: Lost in America

The largest solo survey to date of the work of the American sculptor Jeff Koons in the Gulf region, *Jeff Koons: Lost in America* includes more than 60 of his playful, colourful artworks. Presented at QM Gallery ALRIWAQ as part of the 2021 Qatar–United States Year of Culture.

Qatar Museums Gallery Al Riwaq
Until 31/3/22

Kader Attia: On Silence

This major retrospective of the French-Algerian artist explores over 20 years of his practice. Attia's work addresses social injustice and the global impacts of colonialism through thought-provoking sculptures, paintings and installations. This extensive exhibition at Mathaf includes two new works exclusive to Doha.

Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art
Until 31/3/22

January

4th Aspire Lake Festival

The annual Aspire Lake Festival takes over the artificial lake in the Aspire Zone for a dazzling evening of projections and performance, against the backdrop of the Aspire Tower.

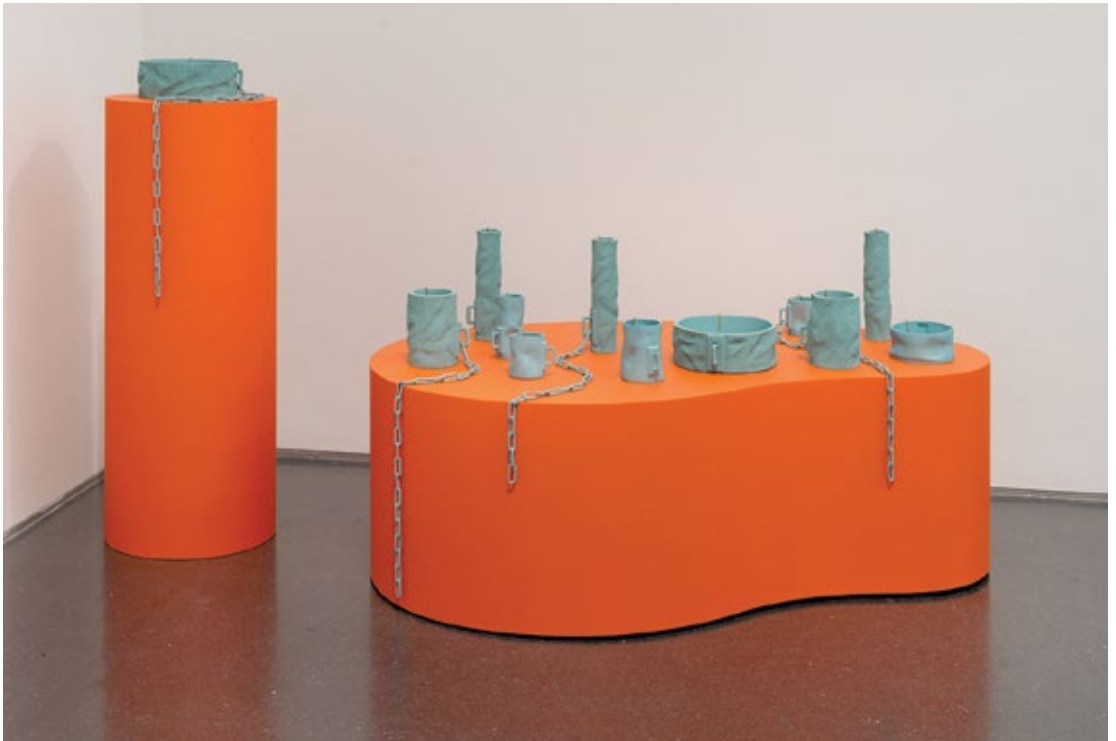
Aspire Park

Al Shaqab International Equestrian Competition

The only event of its kind in the region—and one of the world's best—the Al Shaqab is the equestrian event of the year. Join top-ranking local and international riders as they compete in Olympic-level showjumping.

Al Shaqab – Qatar Foundation

Please note dates are shown in day / month format.



Top: Virgil Abloh, *Figures of Speech*. Bottom right: Jeff Koons, *Balloon Dog (Orange)*, 1994–2000. The Mugar Collection. © Jeff Koons. Courtesy Mnuchin Gallery, New York. Photo: Tom Powel Imaging. Bottom left: Christian Dior: *Designer of Dreams*.



Top: Qatar International Food Festival
11th Edition. Bottom: African Festival.

Ivan Marchuk

The Genotype of Freedom

Revered and prolific Ukrainian painter, Ivan Marchuk, paints detailed and surreal landscapes of the subconscious mind. This exhibition, featuring over 100 of the artist's works, invites you to explore his unique and rich world.

Katara, B47 – Galley 1 & 2
20/1/22 – 9/2/22

Piano Concert – Canadian Embassy Event

Join the Ambassador of Canada for an evening piano recital at the spectacular Katara Opera House.

Katara Opera House
25/1/22

Shop Qatar 2022

With promotions, events, entertainment and make-up masterclasses, the annual Shop Qatar event activates the best shopping centres around the city.

Various locations
31/1/22 – 28/2/22

February

Al Adaid Desert Challenge 2022

One of the most challenging mountain biking and running events on Qatar's calendar sees competitors ride and run up to 60 km across the country's spectacular sand dunes.

Khor Al Adaid
25/2/22

National Sports Day

Get active with Qatar's annual holiday designed to get the blood pumping. The 11th annual National Sports Day, conceived in 2012 to promote healthy lifestyles, sees people from all walks of life come together for free training sessions and competitions.

Various locations
8/2/22

Katara International Horse Festival

This highlight of the equestrian calendar is a great way to experience the uniqueness of pure-bred Arabian horses, with competitive events at local, regional and international levels.

Katara
2/2/22 – 12/2/22

Al Galayel Championship

This hunting tournament showcases traditional hunting skills as over a dozen teams from across the region compete in Qatar's southern nature reserves.

Sealine

Al Wasmi Gardens Festival 2022

Katara is taken over by greenery in this popular festival, which showcases gardens inspired by different countries. Last year saw treasure hunts, food stalls, performances and craft workshops. What will this year bring?

Katara Cultural Village

Aisha Fakhroo Exhibition

Artist Aisha Fakhroo is passionate about documenting Qatar's heritage—her paintings have featured in Qatar Museums' popular Mal Lawal exhibition series (roughly translated: 'from the old days'). This solo exhibition promises to take us back to the streets of old Qatar.

B18 Gallery 1
13/2/22 – 27/2/22

African Festival

Katara Cultural Village will be awash with colour and music for this annual festival featuring events, performances and activities from many African nations.

Katara
17/2/22 – 26/2/22

THIMUN QATAR 2022

High-achieving high school students from across Qatar come together to discuss the big issues in this Model United Nations event. This year's topic is eradicating poverty.

Online event
15/2/22 – 18/2/22

Please note dates are shown in day / month format.

Qatar ExxonMobil Open – ATP 250

The Qatar leg of the ATP tournament has long been a highlight of the tennis calendar, hosting the world's best players, with four previous events being selected by players as the ATP 250 tournament of the year.

Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex
14/2/22 – 19/2/22

Qatar TotalEnergies Open

This world-class women's tennis tournament, part of the WTA 500 tour, is a companion event to the ExxonMobil Open—and the standard is equally high.

Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex
20/2/22 – 26/2/22

March

Aspire International Kite Festival

Taking place in the Aspire Zone, the International Kite Festival is a day full of activities and fun for all family members.

Aspire Park

Qatar International Food Festival 2022

Qatar International Food Festival is a multicultural festival that celebrates the country's diverse culinary scene and hosts creative events and happenings.

3/3/22 – 23/3/22

Ali Al Kuwari and Soud Al Boloushi Exhibition

Local artists Ali Al Kuwari and Soud Al Boloushi explore Qatar's culture and landscape in their accomplished realist paintings.

Katara B18 Gallery 2
3/3/22 – 17/3/22

Qatar America Institute for Culture Exhibition

This exhibition from the Qatar America Institute for Culture brings American and Arab cultures together through art and creative displays.

Katara B47/ Gallery 1 & 2
3/3/22 – 23/3/22

Qatar Music Academy Annual Concert

The annual concert sees Qatar Music Academy's most talented students perform a programme of music (both Arabic and Western) live on stage. Come to see the country's finest up-and-coming talent.

Katara Opera House
1/3/22 – 12/3/22

Grand Prix of Qatar (MotoGP™)

The Grand Prix of Qatar is undoubtedly one of the most spectacular events on the MotoGP™ calendar.

Losail International Circuit
4/3/22 – 6/3/22

Palestinian Festival

This festival celebrating the rich and varied culture of Palestine includes art, crafts, fashion, food, literature and education.

Katara – South Parking Phase 4
17/3/22 – 26/3/22

IFLA ILDS Conference

This conference sees library staff and academics come together to discuss the increasing challenges in sharing knowledge and artefacts.

Qatar National Library
8/3/22 – 10/3/22

DIMDEX 2022

The region's military minds all converge on the Qatar National Convention Centre to explore state-of-the-art technology, innovations and trends in this impressive trade show.

Qatar National Convention Centre
21/3/22 – 23/3/22

Please note dates are shown in day / month format.

2nd International Traffic Safety Conference

Great growth means great challenges—this conference seeks to solve the transportation needs for developing countries and to make the roads safer for us all.

Doha Exhibition and Convention Center
22/3/22 – 26/3/22

Qatar International Agricultural and Environmental Exhibition 2022

Local and international agricultural experts exchange expertise, trends and developments at this vibrant annual conference.

Qatar National Convention Centre
28/3/22 – 29/3/22

Doha Forum

Doha Forum is a platform for global leaders to come together and address the real problems facing the world, and develop real solutions through thought-provoking and challenging dialogue.

Sheraton Grand Doha Resort
& Convention Hotel
26/3/22 – 27/3/22

Qatar International Mother and Child Expo

This expo for mothers and mothers-to-be covers all facets of parenthood, from health and wellbeing, diet, hygiene, education and play.

Qatar National Convention Centre
28/3/22 – 29/3/22

May

Milipol Qatar 2022

Global security experts discuss innovations and developments at the region's primary homeland security industry event.

Doha Exhibition and Convention Center
24/5/22 – 26/5/22

June

Project Qatar 2022

This annual conference of International Construction Technology and Building Materials attracts industry leaders and showcases Qatar's dynamic building industry.

Doha Exhibition and Convention Center
6/6/22 – 9/6/22

Summer in Qatar 2022 (Shop Qatar)

Summer in Qatar brings the Shop Qatar experience to the warmer months, with the country's (climate-controlled) shopping malls coming alive with events, community programmes and special offers.

Various locations
13/6/22 – 11/7/22

Hospitality Qatar 2022

This popular hospitality industry trade show shines a spotlight on one of the country's fastest-growing industries, showcasing the latest developments and prospects in the sector.

Doha Exhibition and Convention Center
21/6/22 – 23/6/22



Scan the QR code to download the Visit Qatar app to keep up to date with events, tailor your itinerary, list favourites and more. You can also follow @QatarCalendar on Instagram for the latest what's on information.

Art

Looking around at piercing skyscrapers and freshly tarred roads, you could be forgiven for thinking that Qatar is a brand new country. But there's a long history and rich contemporary culture to explore here.

Start under the interlocking discs of the breathtaking National Museum of Qatar. Follow the scent trail into the vibrant alleyways of Souq Waqif, where the country's trading traditions live on. A stone's throw away is Msheireb Downtown Doha, the city's bright and modern hub. Tying it all together is Katara Cultural Village, home to galleries, eateries and some of the city's most lavish architecture, from the 5,000 seat Greek-inspired amphitheatre to some beautiful mosques.

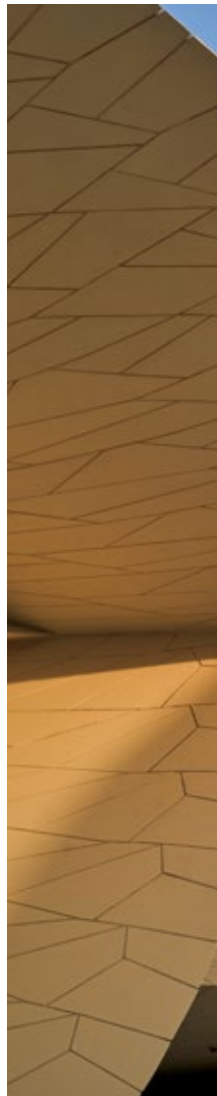
There's plenty to discover along the way in Doha—the city's streets are an art gallery in themselves. Public sculptures from internationally renowned artists materialise around every corner, with connections to the wider world and markers of the value Qatar places on art.

and
culture

Under the Desert Rose

In the heart of Doha, right on the shores of the Arabian Gulf, there's a desert rose. Large interlocking discs spiral and intersect around the walls of an old palace—a striking architectural achievement in a country full of them, a man-made wonder emulating a natural one. In the sands of the Qatari desert, the desert rose crystal is a natural mineral formation indicating the presence of water beneath. It symbolises hope.

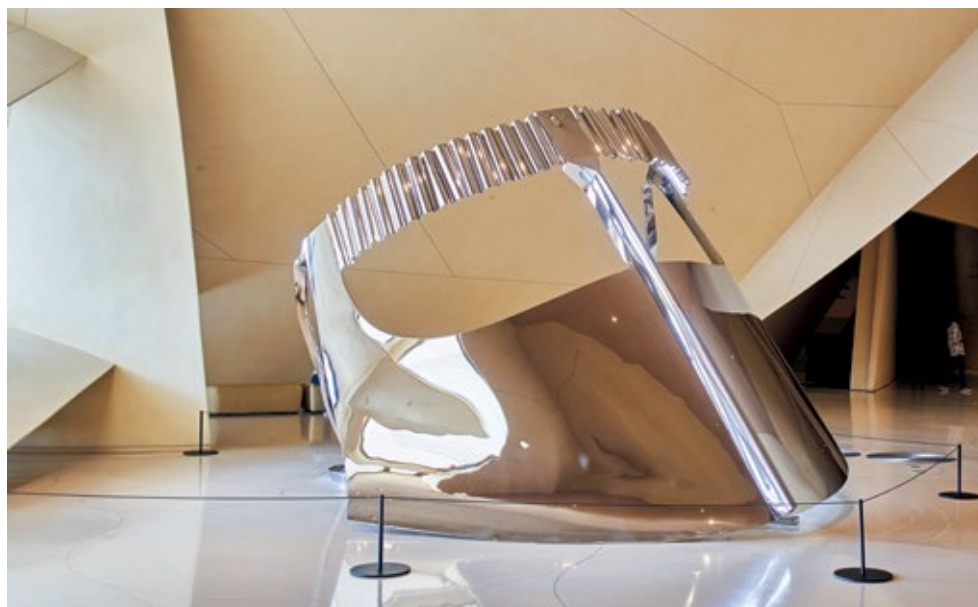
Here, reflected in the waters of an artificial lagoon along the Doha Corniche, the desert rose is also the building that houses the National Museum of Qatar. Designed by renowned French architect Jean Nouvel and opened in 2019, this architectural masterpiece draws crowds—architecture students and scholars from across the world come to study it—but it's what's beneath the surface that matters. Inside, approximately 8,000 objects tell the story of Qatar, past, present and future, from archaeological artefacts to household items, from textiles and clothing to artworks and documents.



We visit the National Museum of Qatar, and discover a building where the past, present and future intertwine.

The interlocking discs of the National Museum of Qatar are designed to resemble a desert rose.





Top: Inside the museum, projections enhance your understanding of the collection.
Bottom: A sculpture based on a traditional Battoulah mask.

“The opening of the National Museum of Qatar was a source of immense pride for our country. The museum will always be a dynamic resource in its programmes as well as its exhibitions. Culture connects people, and with this museum we believe we have created an exceptional platform for dialogue,” says Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairperson, Qatar Museums, who has worked to connect and amplify the nation’s growing network of museums, heritage sites, festivals, public art installations and programmes.

An independent Qatar is just decades old. But the history here—revealed within the walls of the National Museum of Qatar—runs far deeper. The museum gives voice to the country’s culture and heritage through artefacts, oral histories, music, films and artworks. It takes the visitor on an immersive and multisensory journey of its 1.5 km thematic and chronological galleries.

It’s a building free of straight lines, both architecturally and historically. At the heart of the National Museum is the historic and now restored Palace of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani (1880-1957), the son of the founder of modern Qatar. Built in the early 1900s, this palace is enormously important as a national symbol and is one of the best loved of Qatar’s landmarks. Following a painstaking restoration project over a period of more than three years, it now forms the final highlight of a visit to the museum.

Through the beautifully designed immersive galleries, visitors experience compelling storytelling that engages the imagination through oral histories, commissioned artworks, music, archaeological and heritage objects, site-specific art films, and more. Each element adds its own perspective to the complex narrative of Qatar.

Of the incredible artefacts and antiquities within the National Museum, a highlight is the Pearl Carpet of Baroda. Embroidered with some 1.5 million Basra Pearls—so called because they were traded through Basra (in Iraq), a major Gulf pearl trade hub—it is also decorated with diamonds, sapphires, emeralds and rubies. The Pearl Carpet of Baroda is the centrepiece of a gallery presenting the results of the pearling industry and Qatar’s connections with the world through pearl exports.

In contrast, some of the most fascinating exhibits look trivial at first glance. Some ten centuries ago, a Chinese cargo ship, bound for the Qatar peninsula, was wrecked off the coast of Indonesia. Five fine porcelain dishes, held underwater for a thousand years, now reside in the museum. Preserved by the seabed, these household items have taken on a new sculptural form, held together by shells and barnacles, the man-made interlocking with the natural, drawing it into 21st century imaginations. Their mix of the man-made and the natural crystalline structures isn’t unlike the building that houses them. You can see this item as part of the museum’s online collection.



About the museum

How do I get there?

The museum is on Museum Park Street, Doha, on the southern side of the Corniche. The National Museum metro station is right outside.

How much does it cost?

Visit the museum website for ticket information, qm.org.qa

How long should I spend there?

You could spend all day exploring the collection, but we recommend at least two hours to get the most out of it. There are restaurants and cafes on site if you need to refuel.

What should I bring?

Remember to dress conservatively. You should be covered from your shoulders to your knees.

Qatar's rich history is explored through ancient artefacts and contemporary methods.

Cultural hubs

The cultural life of Qatar is divided across three distinct neighbourhoods. You could spend a day in each and barely scratch the surface.

Souq Waqif

Souq Waqif is the city's oldest marketplace. Once it was a hub for trading sheep, goats and wool, right on the waterfront. Now, carefully rebuilt, it's an unmissable tourist hotspot and a link to the country's past. Its tangled warren of streets and lanes are home to stalls full of clothes, antiques, spices, jewellery and food. Pick up some souvenirs, taste some local produce (you'll find some of the city's best no-fuss local eateries right here) and meet the local wildlife, from the falcons (falconry is a traditional sport in Qatar) to the white horses that carry the traditional mounted police.

Doha

Msheireb Downtown Doha

Right next to Souq Waqif, this carefully planned district is everything a slick downtown neighbourhood should be, full of restaurants, boutiques and museums—don't miss the Msheireb Museums, a deep dive into the city's history (see page 39 for more). Msheireb Downtown Doha came about as a total rethink of the city centre—a sustainable regeneration project, rebuilt from the ground up.

Msheireb Downtown Doha
+974 4000 4000
msheireb.com

Katara Cultural Village

The city's multicultural hub, Katara (the ancient name for Qatar) is all about art, history and culture. With a view over the lights of the city, it's the place to go for art galleries, theatres and spectacular buildings, including the picturesque blue-tiled Katara mosque, the lavish Golden Mosque and an astonishing classical Greek-style amphitheatre. There's also an opera house, a maritime museum and a planetarium. But, in true Qatari style, there's still room for high-end shopping at iconic French department store Galeries Lafayette and the boutiques of 21 High st, and for relaxing on Katara Beach.

Katara Cultural Village
+974 4408 0000
katara.net



Top: Pigeons perch in Katara's pigeon tower, right next to Katara Masjid, one of Qatar's most beautiful mosques.
 Bottom left: Asma Derouiche, Creative Director of the M7 concept store Studio 7, championing contemporary Qatari design.
 Bottom right: The laneways of Souq Waqif.

Museums



The Museum of Islamic Art is built on reclaimed land overlooking the ocean.

Qatar has more than its share of museums, telling the story of the country and the region-at-large, object by object. Everything tells a story, from a priceless pearl to a car's number plate.

Museum of Islamic Art

One of the city's most spectacular spots, MIA houses one of the finest collections of Islamic art in the world, including ceramics, carpets and manuscripts spanning more than a thousand years. Plan to spend the day here—beyond the four floors of the museum, there's an idyllic palm-lined park on the waterfront of Doha filled with public art, including 7, a spectacular permanent installation by the American sculptor Richard Serra. You can take a kayak out on the water looking over the Corniche, and take a break in numerous cafes and spots to eat, including IDAM, a Qatari/French fusion fine-dining experience from renowned chef Alain Ducasse. At the time of writing MIA was closed for renovation. It will reopen in autumn 2022.

The Museum of Islamic Art, Al Corniche, Doha
+974 4422 4444
mia.org.qa

National Museum of Qatar

Built around the Old Amiri Palace, the former residence of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani, this architectural marvel houses approximately 8,000 objects telling the story of Qatar, past, present and future, from archaeological artefacts to household items, from pearl diving and desert life to oil and ambition.

Museum Park Street
+974 4452 5555
nmoq.org.qa

Msheireb Museums

These museums in Msheireb Downtown Doha are spread across four houses, each reconstructed to reflect a different facet of Qatar's history. The first is a carefully restored early 20th century Qatari family home, the second was the site of the humble former headquarters of an oil company, which shows the country's 20th century transformation into an energy powerhouse. The third brings visitors up to speed with the country's recent past, present and future. Finally, the fourth is a house packed full of artefacts telling the story of the impact of slavery on the region. Go for an intimate look at Qatar from a local perspective.

Zone 3, Street 830, Building 10,
Al Arsheef Al Watani Street
+974 4006 5555
msheirebmuseums.com

FBQ

Away from the city you'll find the imposing stone palace that houses the Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani Museum (FBQ Museum for short), one of the world's largest private museums, telling the story of Qatar through the lens of one of its richest entrepreneurs. This means you get an eclectic collection, from the Jurassic to the present day, a priceless art collection, and an array of international artefacts the Sheikh has collected on his travels across the world. There's also a large selection of the Sheikh's own personal interests on display, including over 600 vintage cars.

+974 4490 2340
alsamriyaestate.com



Top left: The National Museum of Qatar is one of the city's most beautiful buildings.
Bottom left: Detail from the FBQ Museum. Right: The Qatar National Library is a popular community hub.





Inside at Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani (FBQ) Museum.

Qatar National Library

Housed inside one of Qatar's most beautiful buildings, the Qatar National Library is a contemporary hub of knowledge. Offering more than just books, it plays host to events, exhibitions and cultural workshops. Then there's the Heritage Library with rare books, manuscripts and other materials related to Arab-Islamic civilisation. Open to all you'll also find a restaurant, cafes, an auditorium and a children's library.

Education City
+974 4454 0100
qnl.qa

Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art

With one of the largest collections of sculptures and paintings by Arab artists in the world, Mathaf offers a vital alternative history of Arabic art. The gallery has a permanent collection, a library and hosts regular temporary exhibitions. It's fascinating to see over a century of contemporary

art with an Arabic voice, a story which has been under told on the world stage. For those who want to keep engaging after their visit, Mathaf also offers an unparalleled online resource, the Mathaf Encyclopedia of Modern Art and the Arab World (encyclopedia.mathaf.org.qa).

Education City
+974 4402 8855
mathaf.org.qa

Arab Postal Stamps Museum

Into stamp collecting? The dedicated philatelist knows there's a lot more to a postage stamp than meets the eye. The Arab Postal Stamps Museum collects artefacts from 22 Arab countries. It's a cultural survey showcasing the design, history and commerce of a vibrant region. You never know, you might find yourself with a new hobby.

Building 22, Katara Cultural Village
+974 4409 1077
katara.net

Art galleries

Art is everywhere in Qatar. Here is just a handful of the city's galleries, boasting everything from local painters to international shows.



A repurposed fire station has become one of the city's best contemporary art spaces, the Fire Station: Artists in Residence.

Fire Station: Artists in Residence

When the last fire engine left the building in 2012, this modern industrial building became home to some of Qatar's best contemporary art. Over the years it has hosted the works of everyone from 20th century legend Picasso to contemporary pop-art superstar KAWS. You'll share the space with artists—not only is there a successful artist-in-residence programme providing studio space for up-and-coming artists, but there's an arts supply store on site.

Mohammed Bin Thani Street
+974 4422 4222
firestation.org.qa

Katara Art Centre

In Katara Cultural Village, the KAC is more than a gallery—its mission is to give artists the space to develop. Across lots of little spaces, including the Al Markhiya Gallery, an offshoot based in Souq Waqif, the KAC hosts a variety of exhibitions from photography to painting to sculpture, as well as short courses and classes.

Building 5, Katara Cultural Village
+974 4408 0244
dohakac.com/about-kac

ART29

The 29th floor of the W Doha hotel is dedicated to ART29, a space for local and international emerging and established artists, with a cafe attached and a spectacular view over West Bay, the city's business district.

West Bay, Zone 61, Street 831, Building 262
+974 4453 5000
marriott.com/hotels/travel/dohwh-w-doha



You'll find the distinctive Ralph's Coffee truck parked at various Doha landmarks.

Scan the QR code to access Fire Station: Artists in Residence artist Muna Al Bader's personal recommendations and favourite Qatar art spots.





Street art at the Fire Station: Artists in Residence.

Qatar's spectacular public art

Art isn't confined to the galleries. Qatar has a penchant for public art, particularly sculpture. Around every corner, you'll find work by local artists and world-renowned artists, from the quirky to the moving, from the laneways of Souq Waqif to the sands of the desert.

Walking the laneways of Souq Waqif, you're bound to run into *Le Pouce*, an avant-garde piece by French artist César Baldaccini—it translates, plainly enough, as 'The Thumb', and it's just that—a two-storey high gold thumb sticking out of the ground.

The 14 sculptures of British artist Damien Hirst's striking *The Miraculous Journey*, right outside the women and children's hospital at Sidra Medicine, depict various stages of the development of a foetus in the womb, from egg to (15 m tall) infant. It's a compassionate and very human statement.

Over at the Qatar National Convention Centre, you can see Louise Bourgeois' *Maman*, a giant spider in marble, bronze and stainless steel, its spindly legs straddling the foyer.

Subodh Gupta's *Gandhi's Three Monkeys*, on the waterfront in Katara Cultural Village, takes the form of three giant heads to portray different facets of war and peace.

Art isn't confined to the city. Perhaps the country's most spectacular piece is American artist Richard Serra's *East-West/West-East*, a series of 16 m high oxidised

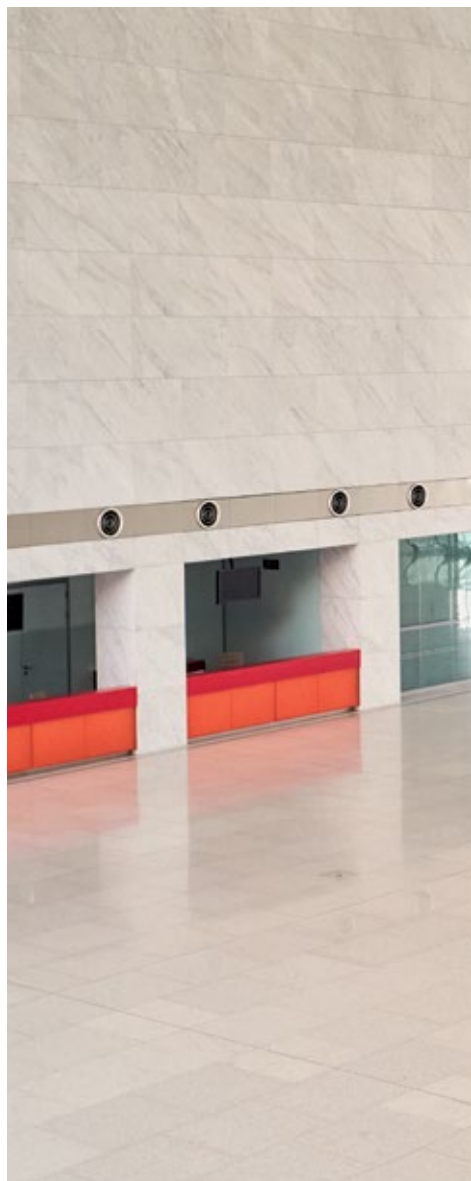


steel plinths towering over the desert sands of the Brouq Nature Reserve—an eerie, beautiful landmark in a featureless landscape. It's absolutely worth leaving town for.

Art at the airport: there's more to do at Hamad International Airport than simply grab a coffee and wait at the gate—there's a plethora of sculpture to check out. Turn to page 212 for more.

There's so much more public art to be found—but part of the fun of it is being taken by surprise...

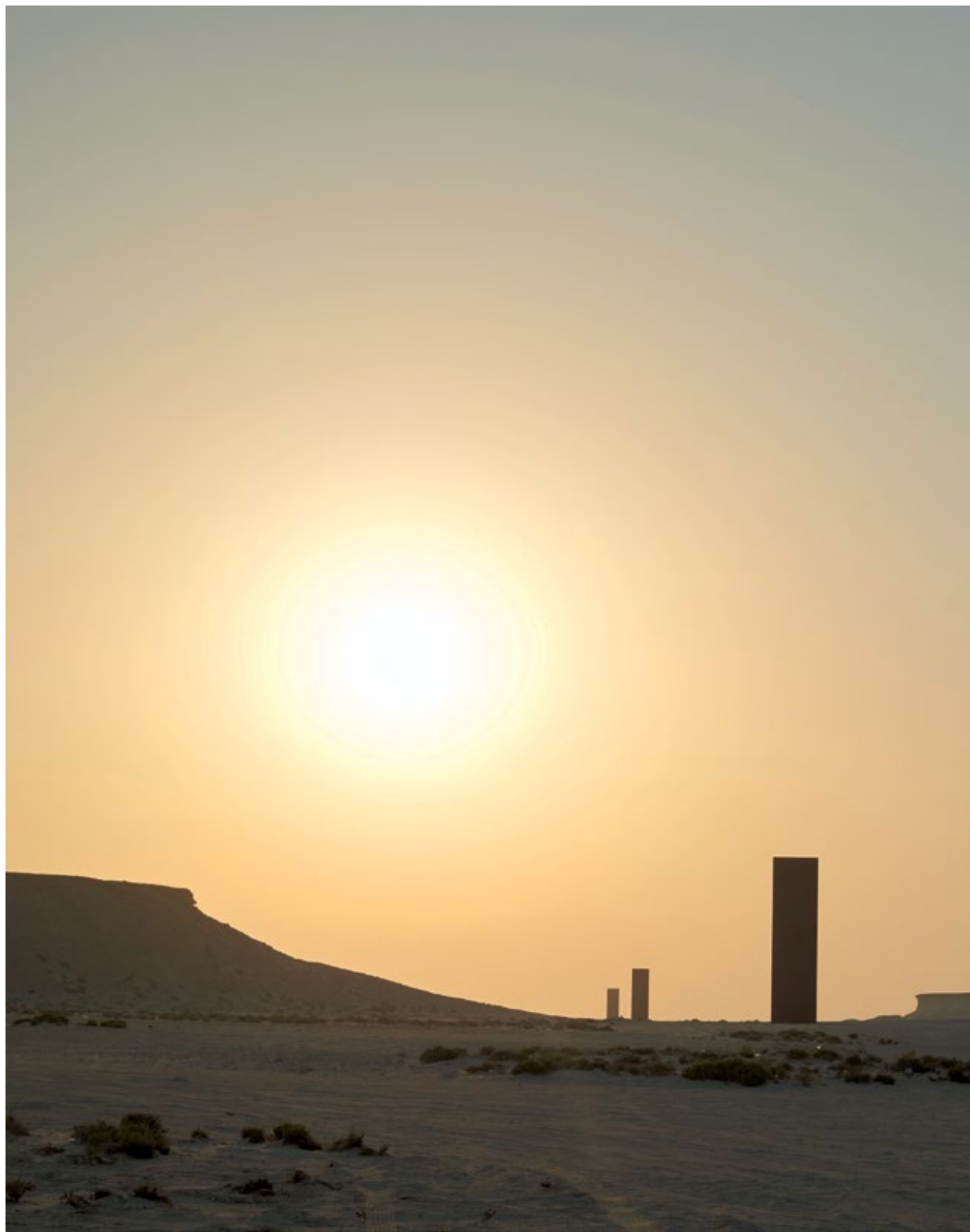
Right: Louise Bourgeois' *Maman*, at the Qatar National Convention Centre. Bottom: César Baldaccini's *Le Pouce*, which translates, plainly enough, as 'The Thumb'.





Scan below for more galleries,
museums and cultural hotspots.





Richard Serra's breathtaking *East-West/West-East*, in the desert sands of the Brouq Nature Reserve.



Activities

Want to get hands-on? These activities and courses are a great way to go deeper into Qatari culture.

Arts and crafts

There are plenty of short courses and classes for adults and children alike. The Museum of Islamic Art hosts classes designed to use your creativity to learn about the museum's collections.

The Museum of Islamic Art, Al Corniche
+974 4422 4444
mia.org.qa

The Arts and Crafts Centre

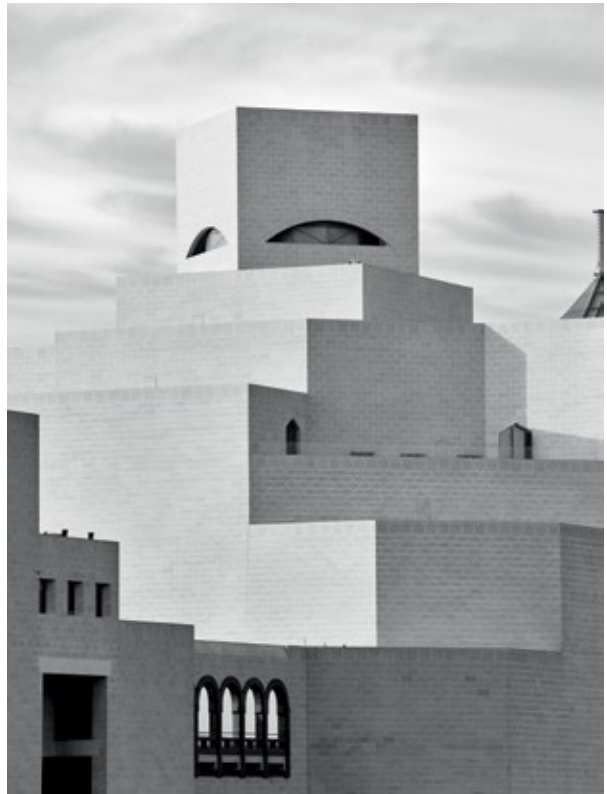
The Arts and Crafts Centre runs plenty of classes, including sketching and pottery.

Villa 7, Al Duhail, South Doha
+974 6686 7993
artsandcrafts.qa

Majlis Book Club

Held at the Museum of Islamic Art, the Majlis Book Club meets every month to discuss one book in English and one in Arabic, both chosen to deepen your understanding of the Arab world.

The Museum of Islamic Art, Al Corniche
+974 4422 4444
mia.org.qa



Detail of the Museum of Islamic Art.

Folklore, fashion and the future: Qatar's contemporary artists

Qatar's visual art scene is expanding rapidly, representing diverse voices.

Painter and sculptor Wafika Sultan Al-Essa, one of the first Qatari women to gain attention as an artist, is known for her Islamic visuals, from calligraphy to her take on Qatari folklore, with a progressive, feminist angle.

Award-winning photographer and filmmaker Sara Al Obaidly has had her work shown in galleries and magazines all over the world. Her stunning photographs have captured a country in a state of change, from its landscape to its people.

Painter and conceptual artist Faisal Alhajri has exhibited as a resident artist at Fire Station: Artists in Residence and has collaborated with brands like Harvey Nichols. His work is about fashion, introspection and self-belief, from cubist-inspired paintings to surreal sculpture.

Bouthayna Al Muftah's prints, installations and performances explore Qatar's oral history and the rapid social change sweeping the country. Check out her *Lawha Lil-Dawha* series.

Live music

As a young city with a mix of Middle Eastern and western cultures, Doha's emerging music scene splinters in all kinds of interesting directions, from jazz to hip hop to Latin beats. You'll find cover bands in a lot of hotel bars.

Jazz Club at Hyatt Regency Oryx Doha

Jazz Club at Oryx Rotana is a chilled club for drinks, dinner and a live band every night. You're expected to dress up a bit, which only enhances the vibe. They also have a cigar room if you're that way inclined.

Al Matar Street Oryx Doha, Doha
+974 4141 1234
hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/qatar/hyatt-regency-oryx-doha/dohrd/dining

The Backyard

The Backyard is Doha's largest outdoor venue, a great spot to relax on the grass and listen to local DJs spinning contemporary hits.

candelaentertainment.com/home/thebackyard

Paloma

Paloma is a cool night spot for Tex-Mex, drinks and a rotating house band performing international hits.

Street 900, Building 25, Zone 61 Al Dafna,
West Bay Lagoon
+974 4484 4919
doha.intercontinental.com/paloma

Katara Opera House

This grand building, the home of the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, hosts a wide range of performances, events and film screenings. Recent shows include piano concertos, traditional folk music and ballet.

Building 16, Katara Cultural Village
+974 4408 0244
katara.net

The sounds of Qatar

Qatar has a rich musical history which is being carried forward by a new generation of artists. Here are a couple you can stream now.

Musician, activist and fashion model Fahad Al Kubaisi is a popular artist working in the Khaliji genre—a contemporary take on traditional Gulf sounds, with a distinct baritone voice, plenty of oud (a lute-like stringed instrument) and slick pop production. His 2017 album *Anta Eshq* was the first Qatari album to be nominated for a Grammy.

And Dana Al Fardan, the first Qatari woman to make a career as a composer and songwriter, is as known for her pop-influenced ballads as she is for cinematic contemporary classical compositions, including *Rumi*, a musical about the much-loved poet. She's also the founder of the country's first record label, DNA Records.

Sun,

Qatar is surrounded by pristine beaches, so it's no surprise that water is a way of life here.

With still, crystal clear water and year-round sun, Qatar is quickly becoming known as a watersports destination. On page 58 we meet Sarah Lord, a dedicated kitesurfer responsible for training Qatar's Olympic team. Now, she's planning to put Qatar on the global kitesurfing map.

On page 66, we take a tour around the country's stunning coastline to find the best beaches, from popular family getaways to off the beaten track spots. With a coastline of roughly 700 km, almost all of it beach, there's plenty of room for everyone.

But you don't even have to leave town to take a swim. Katara Beach is the spot for watersports, from parasailing to jet skiing. And there are many hotel pools, spas and waterparks (turn to page 76 to experience Desert Falls Water & Adventure Park, one of the biggest waterparks in the Middle East to cater to every taste).

sea and
sand

Surfin' Qatari

“The first time I rode on the board, I was hooked,” says kitesurfer Sarah Lord. “You have to learn how to fly the kite first, before you get out on the water. It was exhilarating, riding on the board for the first time.”

Twenty years ago, when Lord first heard of the sport, kitesurfing (along with its close relative kiteboarding) was an obscure activity. Now, it’s one of the fastest growing sports in the world.

For the uninitiated: on a board a little like a wakeboard, kitesurfers use a kite to harness the wind, propelling them, across the surface of the water. You don’t need big waves—you can do it on flat, landlocked water. All you need is the wind.

“It’s a very solo sport,” says Lord. “It’s a weird feeling, because it’s quite adrenaline-fuelled, but you’re also at one with nature. It’s a really nice combination of adrenaline and pure relaxation. You feel free. You forget about everything.”

Lord has dedicated years to teaching kitesurfing to Qataris. The country has perfect kitesurfing conditions, she says—and she wants to tell the world.

Qatar has sea, wind and sun—adding up to the best kitesurfing conditions in the world. Sarah Lord, Qatar's foremost professional kitesurfing instructor, grew up here. And she wants to share it with you.



Kitesurf instructor Sarah Lord ready to hit the sea at Katara Beach.

What are those conditions? Qatar is a peninsula surrounded by open sea. There's a fresh, consistent north wind that comes straight off the ocean. Perfect kite-flying weather.

"And the weather is a huge pull," Lord adds. "From November to July, we have a long stretch of one perfect season."

Kitesurfing has always been more than a hobby for Lord. The sport ties together her life-long connection to the water with her memories of her father.

Lord's parents moved to the Middle East in the 1970s and settled in Qatar when Lord was a toddler. Her father was a keen windsurfer and her strongest childhood memories are of sitting perched on his board out in the ocean.

"Every day after school it was just routine. He'd pick us up from school and we'd head straight to the beach," remembers Lord. "He'd take me out on the water because there was no one to look after me on the shore."

"In those days, there wasn't much here," she says. "The whole coast was a beach."

In the early 2000s, when the sport was just taking off, Lord's father had just got 'wind' of it.

"He said to me, 'I've seen this thing called kitesurfing, we've got to try it.'" Shortly after that, he passed away. "So I had to do it," says Lord.

By then in her early twenties, Lord learned to kitesurf in the most dangerous way possible: she taught herself.

Now, with the latest safety technology and a qualified instructor, it takes about nine hours to become a safe and independent kitesurfer. "Back then," says Lord, "using whatever I could find on the internet, and with very dangerous and tatty equipment, it took me about a month. But I got there in the end."

Then she was addicted. She spent her days as a schoolteacher watching the breeze in the trees through the window, counting down the minutes until she could get out on the water. Before long, she quit her job and moved to Mauritius to become a qualified instructor. She then spent years working as an instructor, following the kitesurfing season around the world. Mauritius, Philippines, Singapore, Egypt, Indonesia. A decade ago, after years of travelling, she made it back to Qatar.

"I have roots here," says Lord. "It's where I've had the best experiences of my life and reached the biggest milestones. Went to school, learned kitesurfing... it's a magnet."

On her return, Lord was tasked with setting up a national kitesurfing team, practising in Fuwairit, a pristine beach 95 km north of Doha.

"It was hard to convince people to travel that far at first. But the Qatari community is very close knit. Once we had one guy, he brought his brother, who brought his cousin, who brought their friends, and it just grew and grew."



Top: Sarah in action. Above and left: Sarah's father had a profound impact on her love of watersports.



Left: Qatar's growing kitesurfing scene at Zekreet about an hour west of Doha.

Within a few years, Qatar hosted the continental championships, then the world racing championships and was developing an Olympic team. Lord is proud to have trained Qataris to compete in these events—particularly women.

“Traditionally here Qatari women aren’t into adrenaline sports,” she says. “It was quite a leap for these ladies to come to the beach and start learning.”

Even now, the sport is very male-dominated. “There’s a misconception that you have to be strong,” says Lord. “Which is wrong. It’s more technical. You can see a lot of young kids doing it.”

Now, kitesurfing has become one of the fastest-growing sports in the world. And despite hosting international championships, Qatar is still a relatively small spot on the map for kitesurfers. “The place is a big secret, but it’s growing every day,” says Lord.

To Lord, Qatar is the best-kept secret in the kitesurfing world. That’s why she’s chosen her favourite kitesurfing spot in the world, Fuwairit, a pristine beach 95 km north of Doha, for her biggest project yet.

“We’re putting together something that will cater for all kitesurfers, from complete beginners to professionals,” says Lord. “It’ll be a fully serviced kite centre welcoming anybody and everybody, experience or no experience, on whatever budget.”

Until then (keep late 2022 in your diary, kitesurfers), the secret is hers.



Qatar offers plenty of variety for watersports enthusiasts. Above: Getting ready to go kitesurfing (left) and stand-up paddle boarding (right). Below: Jet skiing in Doha.



Watersports in Doha: The best spots

The shores of Doha's West Bay are a great spot to explore watersport activities for first-timers. Everything is close together—you can walk to the beach, grab a coffee, do some shopping and experience an adrenaline rush out on the water.

InterContinental Doha (not to be confused with InterContinental Doha – The City, which isn't by the beach) is a great place to base yourself if you want to check out watersports. The hotel hires out jet skis, waterskis, boats and equipment for various sports, and has instructors on hand for sports including kitesurfing.

Nearby is the Diplomatic Club, which offers water skiing, wakeboarding, banana boats and speed boats.

Also a short walk from InterContinental Doha is Katara Beach, where various kiosks offer wakeboarding, kitesurfing, parasailing and scuba diving.

And further north in The Pearl, try Blue Pearl Experience, who can set you up with foiling, windsurfing, kayaking and stand-up paddle boarding.

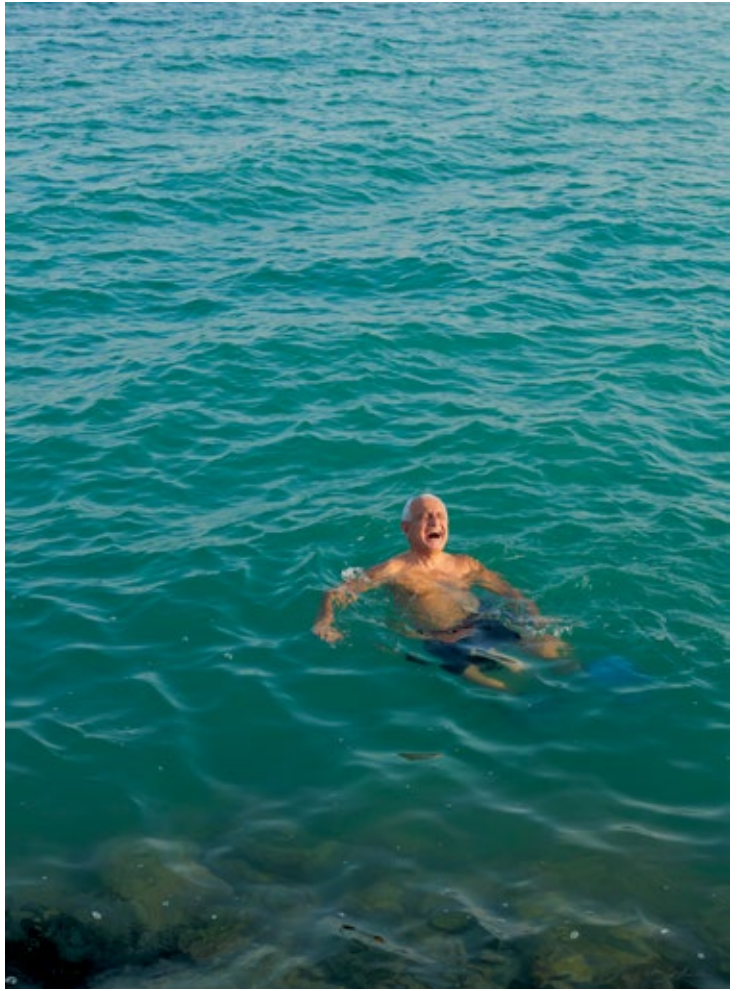
The best free beaches and swimming spots in Qatar

Want to get away from it all for a day? Hire a car and hit the road for an hour or two, and you could have a beautiful beach to yourself, free of charge. Many of these spots are remote and free of shops, car parks and amenities. Bring your own supplies and leave only footprints. Remember that on public beaches you should dress modestly out of respect for the local customs.



Kitesurfing at Zekreet.

Swimming at one of Qatar's many beaches.



North

Al Ghariya

This is a popular spot for family camping, so expect company. The water is shallow here—you can head quite far out without getting over your head, so it's a great spot for kids. There's also dune buggy hire on site.

Distance from Doha: 100 km

Abu Dhalouf Beach, Al Ruwais

With shallow, clear water and unbeatable sunset views, this rocky beach is a great spot for a family trip out of town. The still water also makes it a great spot for first-time kitesurfers. There are a number of cafes and restaurants nearby.

Distance from Doha: 110 km

Fuwairit

Near the northern tip of Qatar, this quiet, untouched spot has no amenities, or shops, so bring your own supplies. Fuwairit Beach is closed from April to July, when the beach is a hatching site for hawksbill sea turtles. Blue Pearl Watersports in Doha offers tours here.

Distance from Doha: 95 km

Azerbaijan Beach

The clear sand and clearer water make this beautiful spot very popular. Camping, jet skis and boats are banned here, adding to the peaceful atmosphere for day visitors.

Distance from Doha: 92 km



Two of Qatar's youngest and most talented kitesurfers getting ready to hit the water.

French Beach (also known as Maroona Beach)

This truly beautiful and remote spot is very popular with tourists, known for its soft golden sand and shallow, clear water. Local wildlife includes fish, hermit crabs, starfish and the occasional turtle—so bring your snorkelling gear.

Distance from Doha: 90 km

East

Al Thakira Beach

One of the most beautiful natural spots in Qatar is the Al Thakira Mangroves, and there is also a great beach right across the bay, with umbrellas, amenities and the beautiful azure sea.

Distance from Doha: 60 km

Farkieh Beach, Al Khor

This family spot has parking, showers and toilets, playgrounds and limited areas of shade.

Distance from Doha: 50 km

Simaisma Beach

With soft sand, shallow waters and sidra trees growing right on the shore, this family beach in the small town of Simaisma is a popular spot close to Doha.

Distance from Doha: 40 km

South

Al Wakrah Beach

Al Wakrah is a little fishing village south of Doha. The picturesque beach is right by Souq Al Wakra, a bustling little market, so there are plenty of amenities including shade, cafes and playgrounds.

Distance from Doha: 20 km

Khor Al Udaid (also known as the Inland Sea)

A popular camping spot for Qataris, this beautiful and peaceful spot at the edge of the desert is also known as the Inland Sea. It is in fact an inlet at the southern end of Qatar (standing on the shore, you can see Saudi Arabia in the distance). It's only accessible with a four-wheel drive

and a driver skilled enough to navigate several kilometres of sand dunes (don't try this yourself). If you're up for adventure, the nail-biting drive alone is worth it.

Distance from Doha: 90 km

West

Umm Bab Beach

This beach is known as the 'Palm Tree Beach' for its date palms which provide some much-needed shelter. They're also very picturesque. There are facilities including restrooms and a children's play area, making it ideal for families and campers.

Distance from Doha: 85 km

Dukhan Beach

This easily accessible spot on the west coast is still far enough away from Doha that you may have the place to yourself. Coming from Doha, you'll hit the main public beach first—go a little further south for a less rocky and more secluded spot. There's also a watersports club right on the shore.

Distance from Doha: 85 km

Zekreet Beach

Zekreet is a popular spot for windsurfing, kitesurfing and camping. This one really is off the beaten track—you'll need to rent a four-wheel drive to get here.

Distance from Doha: 80 km

Scan the QR code below for everything you need to plan your beach holiday.



The best hotels with private beaches and pools



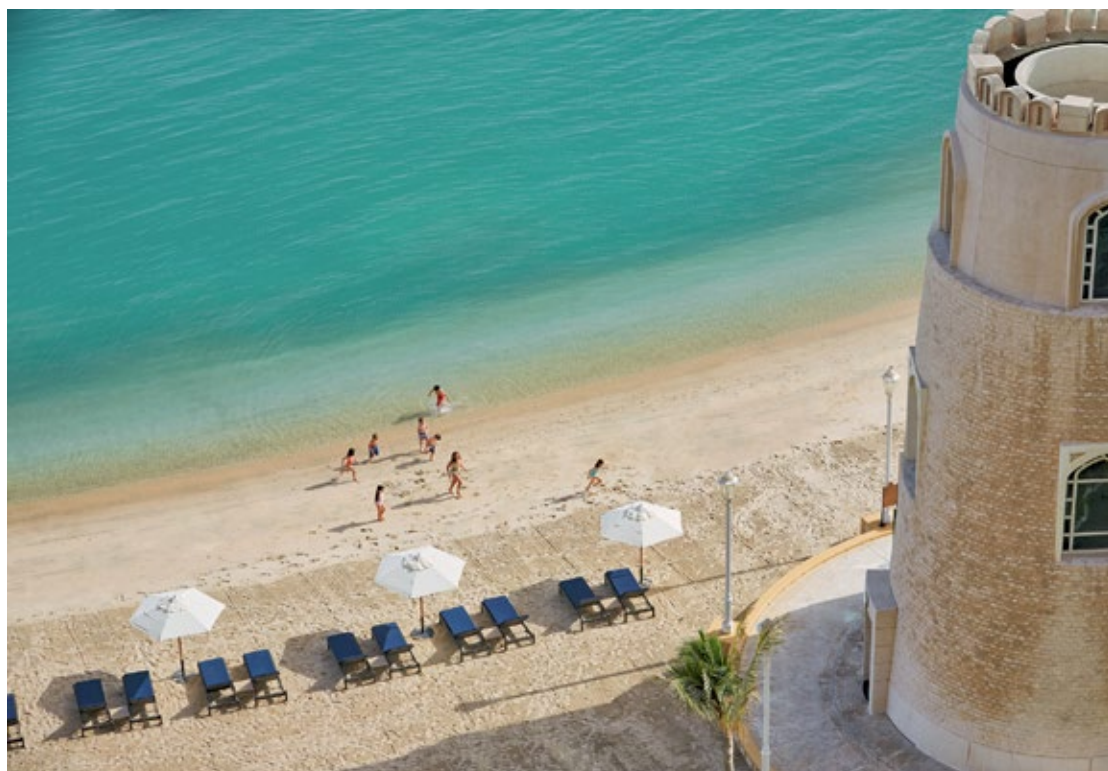
There are countless luxury hotels in Qatar, and most of them have pool facilities and even private beaches. Whether you're a guest or not, you can show up and get a day pass. Here are our picks.



Left and above: Marsa Malaz Kempinski's private beachfront and pool provide the perfect escape for hotel guests and people with day passes.



Banana Island is an ideal luxurious beach day retreat.



Beach side at the Four Seasons.

Banana Island Resort Doha by Anantara

This spectacular offshore island resort, accessible by ferry, is surrounded by 800 m of golden sands, decked with chairs, canopies and beach volleyball nets. The resort also has its own marina, surf pool and dive centre.

3 km off the coast of Doha
+974 4040 5050
anantara.com/en/banana-island-doha

Sealine Beach Resort

The last stop before miles of sand dunes in the country's south is the luxurious Sealine Beach Resort. This remote spot has two swimming pools and a private beach hosting beach volleyball and watersports.

Sealine Beach Road
+974 4021 4000
sealinebeachqatar.com

Four Seasons Hotel Doha

With five pools and a private beach lined with palm trees, the Four Seasons is one of the most luxurious waterfront spots in Doha. Spend the day by the water and then wander over to Nobu, one of the city's finest restaurants (see page 109), right here in the hotel grounds.

Al Corniche, West Bay
+974 4494 8888
fourseasons.com/doha

InterContinental Doha

The InterContinental Doha (not to be confused with the InterContinental – The City) has one of the largest pools in town, and at 500 m, the longest private beach. A great spot to try out some watersports.

West Bay
+974 4484 4444
doha.intercontinental.com

Grand Hyatt Doha Hotel & Villas

The Grand Hyatt has a private 400 m beach, as well as multiple pools, indoors and out.

West Bay Lagoon

+974 4448 1234

hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/qatar/grand-hyatt-doha-hotel-and-villas/dohgh

Hilton Doha

The Hilton has a private beach and two pools, including a huge outdoor one.

Diplomatic District West Bay Area

+974 4423 3333

hilton.com/en/hotels/dohhdhi-hilton-doha

Marsa Malaz Kempinski, The Pearl—Doha

This luxury resort on The Pearl has a spacious private beach and multiple pools, including a whirlpool bath and a kids' pool. It's also a great spot to try watersports.

The Pearl

+974 4035 5555

kempinski.com/en/doha

Sheraton Grand Doha Resort & Convention Hotel

The oldest hotel on the Doha coast and one of the finest, the pool and private beach at the Sheraton Grand are surrounded by lush, manicured gardens.

Al Corniche, West Bay

+974 4485 4444

marriott.com/hotels/travel/dohsi-sheraton-grand-doha-resort-and-convention-hotel

The St. Regis Doha

One huge Olympic-sized pool takes centre stage, with a private beach beyond. You can rent private cabanas complete with their own plunge pools and TVs.

West Bay Lagoon

+974 4446 0000

marriott.com/hotels/travel/dohxr-the-st-regis-doha



Sheraton's iconic pool surrounded by a green oasis and West Bay's buildings in the background.



Hilton Salwa Beach Resort & Villas

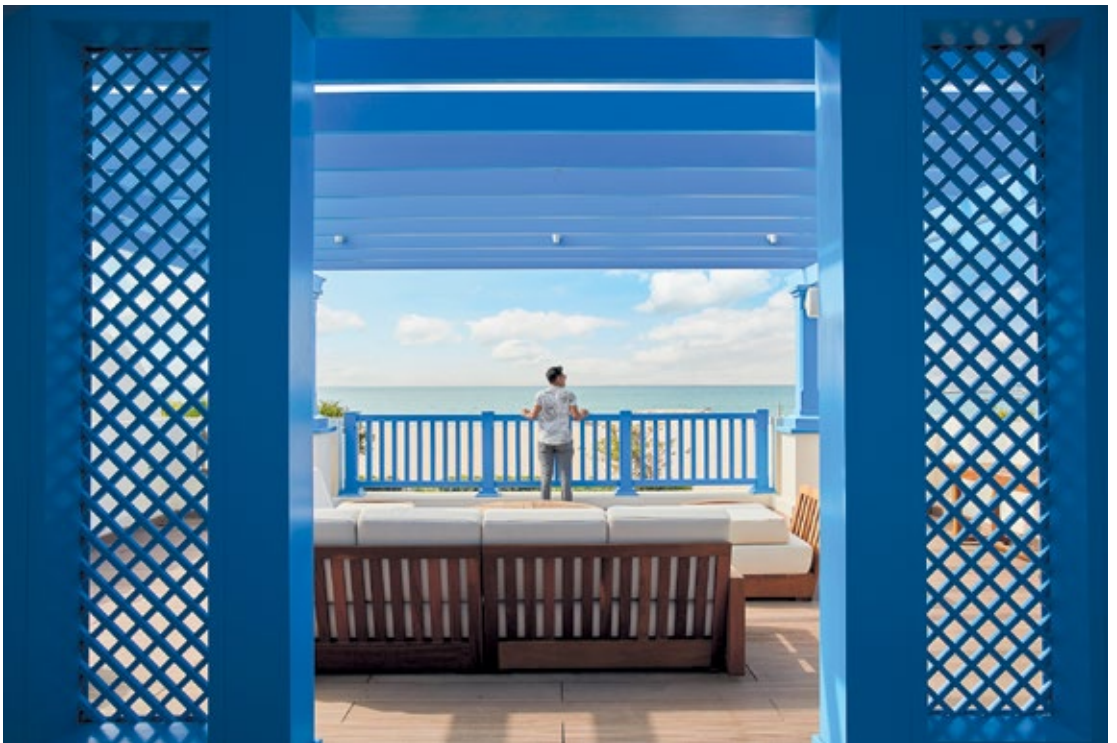
Situated on the remote west coast of Qatar, the newly-opened Salwa Beach Resort is one of Qatar's finest resorts, and a great place to get out on the water. With a 3.5 km private beach, Salwa hosts a busy programme of beach football and beach volleyball, and has its own private marina.

It's the kind of resort that you don't need to leave. There are over 20 restaurant options here, as well as a bar with a full gastropub menu. There's a cinema, small shopping centre and a luxury spa too.

Salwa is also home to Desert Falls Water & Adventure Park, one of the biggest waterparks in the Middle East, with over 50 rides including slides, a wave pool and water playgrounds. The waterpark is also open to day visitors.

And being on the west coast, the sunset over the water is something special.

Salwa Road, Abu Samra
+974 4423 6666
salwabeachresort.qa

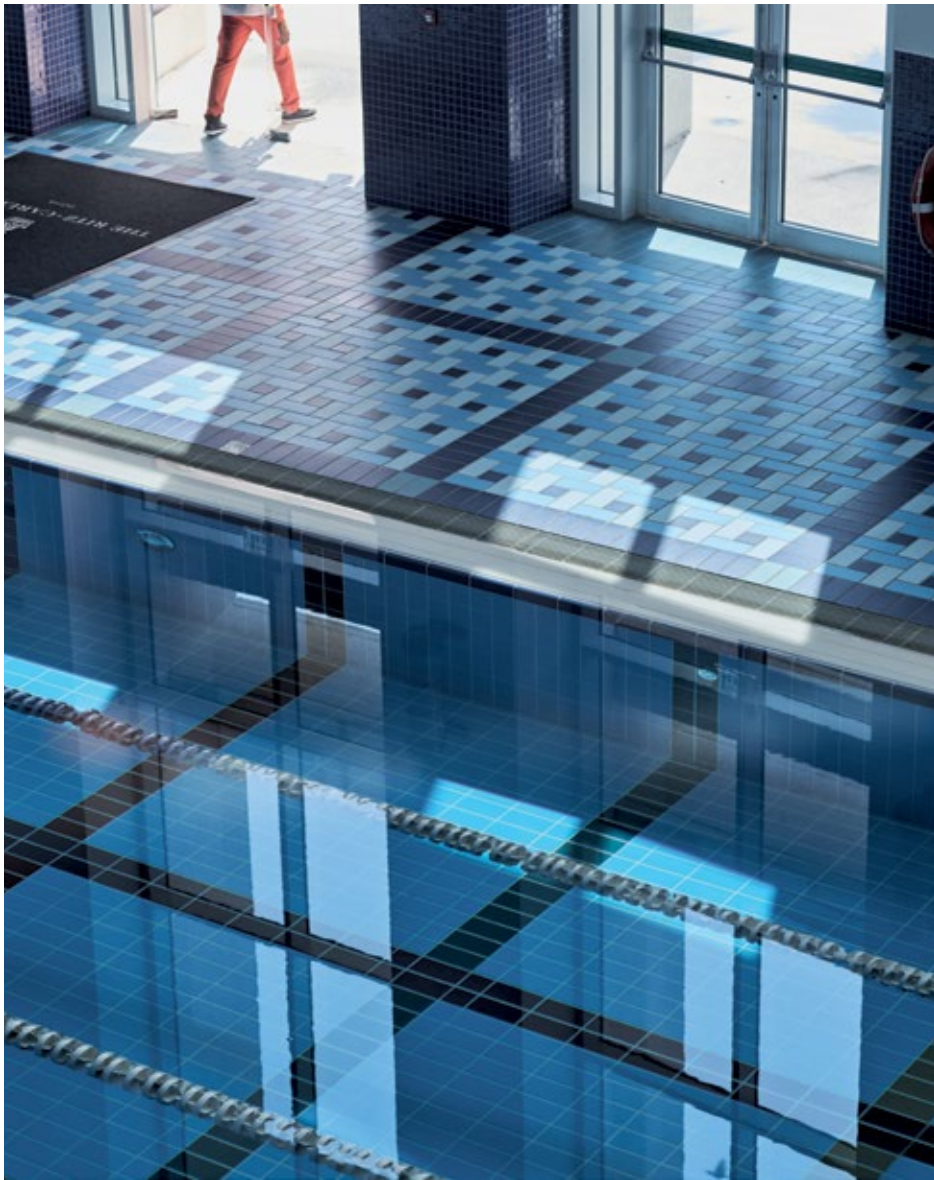


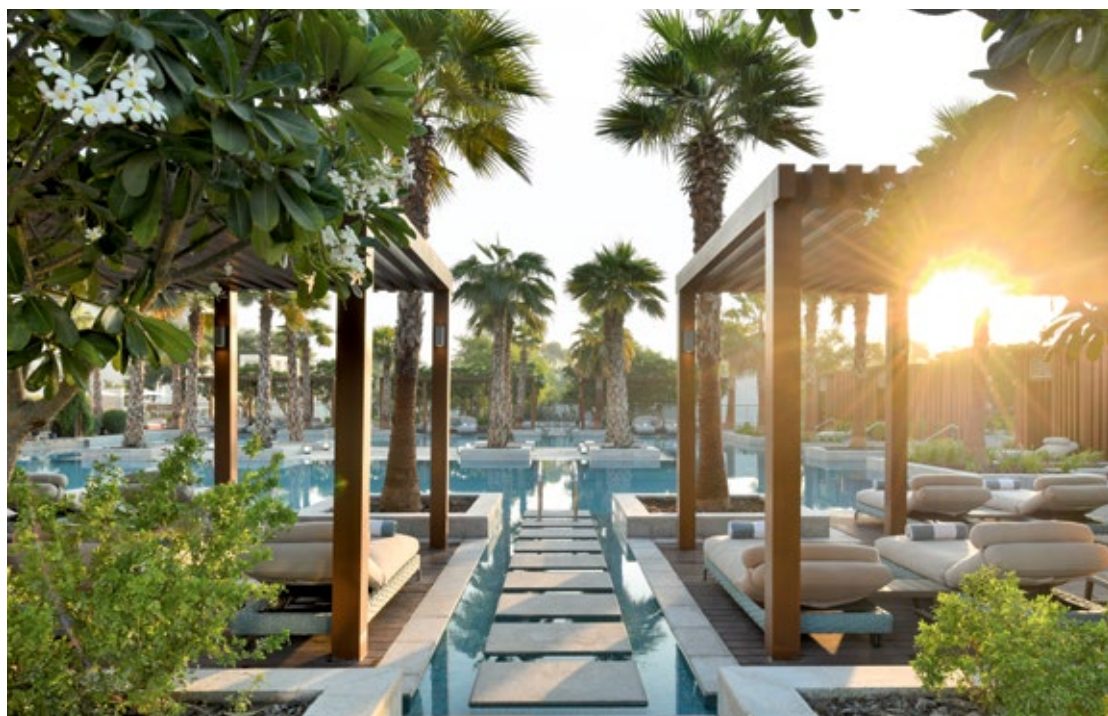
Above: A villa at the Salwa Beach Resort. Right: Come to Salwa for family fun at Desert Falls Water & Adventure Park.



Our top five hotel swimming pools

Even the inland hotels offer great swimming experiences. Here are our favourites.





Al Messila, a Luxury Collection Resort & Spa, Doha

Water is a strong theme at this state-of-the-art resort built on a natural oasis centred on the luxurious swimming pool. But you'll also want to stick around for the spa, one of the finest in the region.

Al Messila
+974 4445 0000
almessiladoha.com

The Ritz-Carlton, Doha

Overlooking the ocean, but without its own beach, The Ritz-Carlton, Doha is still a great spot to swim and lounge, with five pools on site including a kids' pool and a plunge pool.

West Bay Lagoon
+974 4484 8000
ritzcarlton.com/en/hotels/qatar/doha

The Torch Doha

The pool is on the 19th floor of this iconic building, with spectacular views over Aspire Zone and the city.

Al Waab Street, Aspire Zone
+974 4446 5600
thetorhdoha.com.qa

JW Marriott Marquis City Center Doha

Adjacent to the City Center Mall, the pool at the Marriott Marquis is on the 7th floor, surrounded by palm trees and skyscrapers.

West Bay
+974 4429 5000
marriott.com/hotels/travel/dohjlb-jw-marriott-marquis-city-center-doha

The Westin Doha Hotel & Spa

There are three pools at the Westin: an indoor pool, an outdoor infinity pool and a wave pool. If you want to stay a bit longer, there are also five villas with private pools.

Salwa Road
+974 4492 1600
marriott.com/hotels/travel/dohwi-the-westin-doha-hotel-and-spa

Poolside at The Ritz-Carlton, Doha (left) and Al Messila (above).

More great hotel pools

That was our top five, but there are countless others.

Crowne Plaza Doha West Bay

District Zone 61, Diplomatic Area

+974 4019 9999

ihg.com/crowneplaza/hotels/us/en/doha/dohby/hoteldetail

W Doha

West Bay

+974 4453 5000

marriott.com/hotels/travel/dohwh-w-doha

Holiday Inn Doha—The Business Park Hotel

Business Park, Airport Road

+974 4031 3333

ihg.com/holidayinn/hotels/us/en/doha/dohbp/hoteldetail

Hyatt Regency Oryx Doha

Al Matar Street, Doha

+974 4141 1234

hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/qatar/hyatt-regency-oryx-doha/dohrd

Alwadi Hotel Doha—MGallery

Msheireb

+974 4009 9999

alwadihoteldoha.com

Radisson Blu Hotel, Doha

Salwa Road, Doha

+974 4428 1428

radissonhotels.com/en-us/hotels/radisson-blu-doha

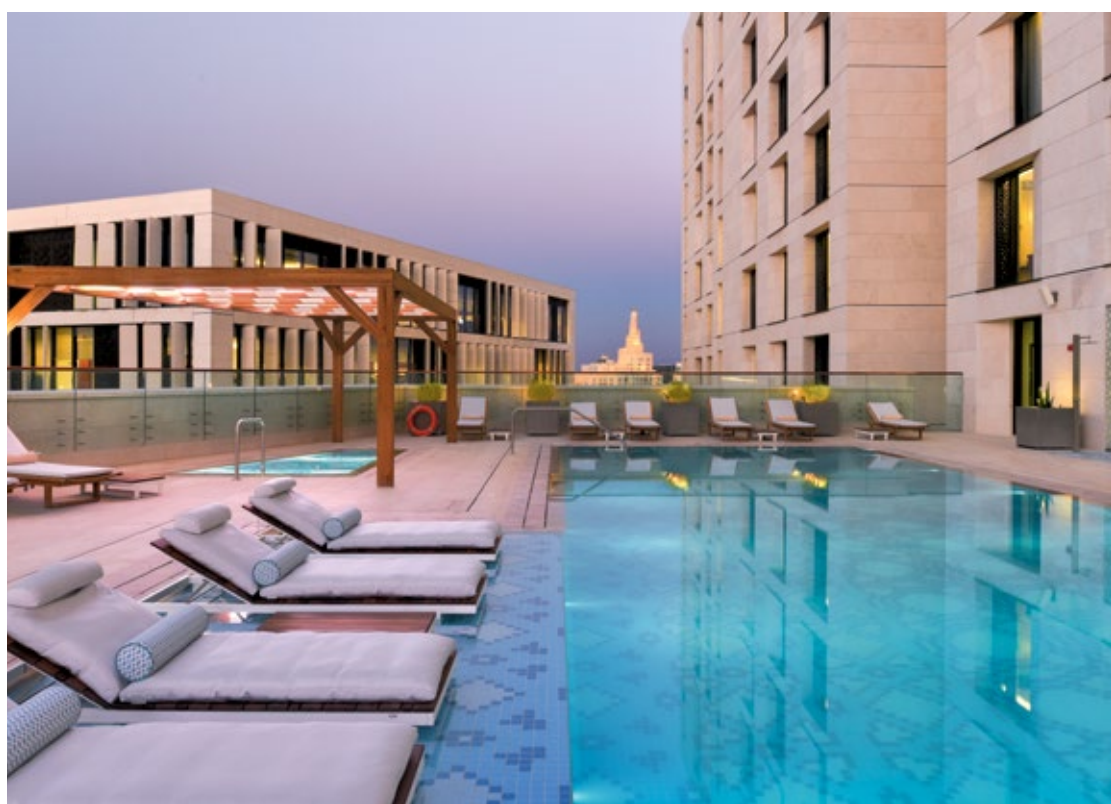
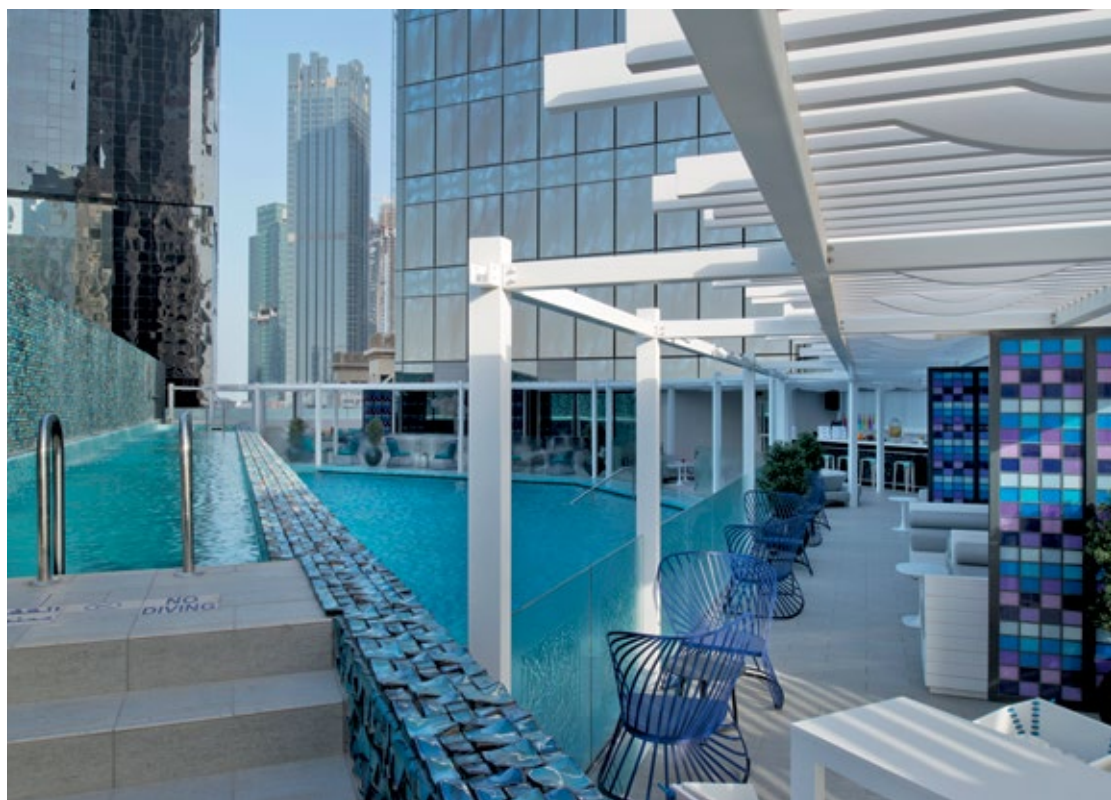
The Curve Hotel Doha

Diplomatic Street, Doha

+974 4007 8888

thecurvehotel.qa

The swimming pools at the W (top) and the Alwadi Hotel (bottom).



Sport
and

ac

Qatar will host the biggest show on Earth when the FIFA World Cup 2022™ kicks off at Al Bayt Stadium. Qatar has gone above and beyond in preparation for the Cup. It'll be the first ever carbon neutral FIFA World Cup.™ Qatar will host 64 matches at eight state-of-the-art stadiums and will be laying out the red carpet for a million visitors to experience the country's buzzing sports culture.

How does a country with such a tiny population become a global football force to be reckoned with? We sit down with World Cup veteran Tim Cahill to ask why he's relocated here and what Qatar does differently when it comes to training young players.

There's plenty to experience beyond football too, from golf courses to horse riding to cruising over mountainous sand dunes. Turn to page 96 for a look at the best of Qatar's other sporting facilities.

Adventure

How to pull off the biggest show on Earth

Tim Cahill had been coming to Qatar for years before he really looked around. In his career, Tim Cahill has played football all over the world alongside the best of the best, from Sydney to London to Shanghai—not to mention playing in four World Cups. For a lot of that time, Qatar was just a stop on the map. But now Tim calls Qatar home and he's taking the lead role helping train the players of the future.

"I'd been before to play friendlies," he says. "But there was hardly anything here."

But then, a decade ago, injury struck.

"I had a major problem with plantar fasciitis in my foot and people were questioning my career," says Cahill. "I'd heard about Aspetar (Qatar's specialised orthopaedic and sports medicine hospital), so I came to check out the facilities. To cut a long story short, I was blown away."

What makes Qatar the ideal spot for a World Cup? We look over the stats and talk to footballing legend Tim Cahill about why he now calls Qatar home—and just how this small country punches well above its weight when it comes to football.



Football legend Tim Cahill at the Aspire Centre.



Top: Aerial view of Al Janoub Stadium, in Al Wakrah. Its design is inspired by the sails of traditional dhow boats.
Bottom: Inside Education City Stadium.

Since Cahill's revelatory 2011 visit to Aspetar, he's taken every opportunity to use Qatar as a second home. "It became a place for getting fit, for training," he said. "I've built this rapport with the place."

It's a testament to the drive of Qataris that it's now hard to believe there was ever "hardly anything here," as Cahill remembers. Look at a photograph of Doha 40 years ago and you'll see a desert. Now, it's a metropolis. And development has only increased in the years since Qatar secured the FIFA World Cup 2022.

For Cahill's fifth FIFA World Cup, he's in a very different role, acting as an ambassador. He's also a key player in Qatar's commitment to football through his work as Chief Sports Officer at the Aspire Academy, which provides high-level training for Qataris to become elite athletes.

Cahill isn't shy about how much he believes in his work at Aspire. "Without Aspire," he says, "there would be no World Cup."

An estimated one million plus people will visit Qatar over the four weeks of the FIFA World Cup 2022. Over 3.5 billion more will tune in on TVs across the world.

This will be a World Cup of firsts. It's the first in the Arab world. And with Qatar being just 160 km top to bottom and 90 km across, it's the smallest nation to have hosted the Cup. This means that for the first time, fans will be able to dash between games on the same day, either by driving or by getting the state-of-the-art metro system. The country will be one big football festival.

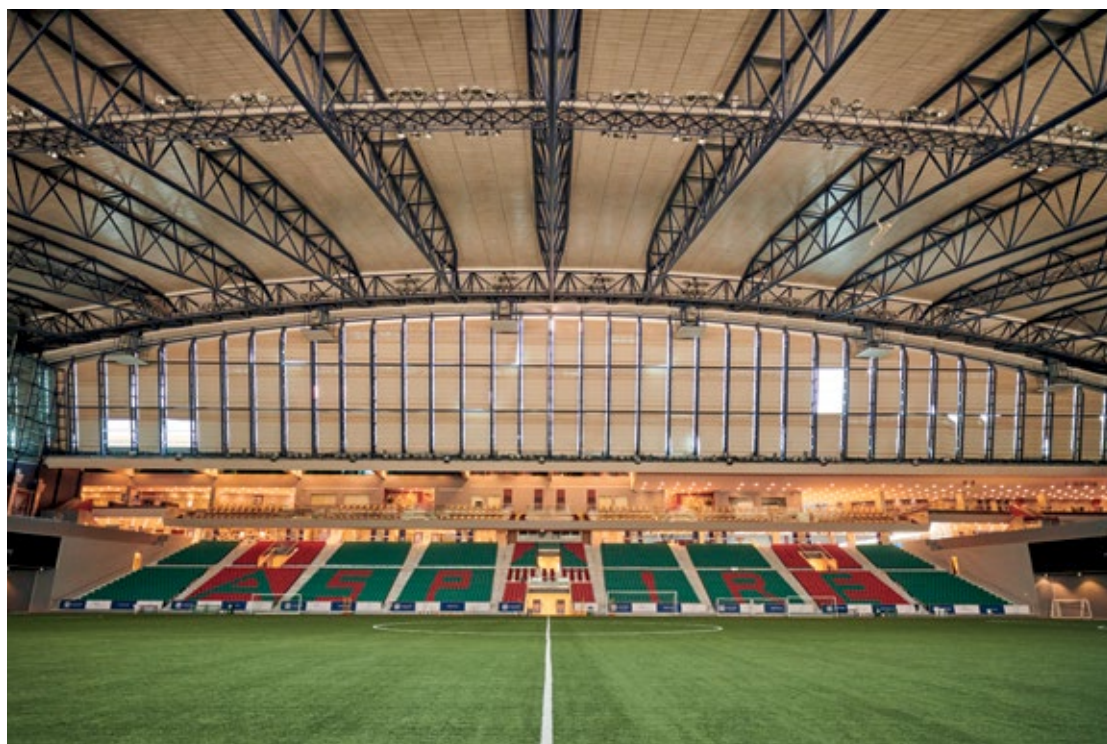
It will also be the first time many fans have visited the Middle East. Qatar's location makes it an ideal meeting point for many different countries. According to Qatar Tourism Chairman Akbar Al Baker, around half the world's population is within a five-hour flight radius. It's no coincidence that Qatar, and other cities in the region, are popular stopovers for international travellers.

Of Qatar's eight FIFA World Cup stadiums, seven have been specially built. Each holds between 40,000 and 80,000 spectators. Players and fans will benefit from cooled and purified air—the designer of this revolutionary cooling process has humbly referred to it as akin to air-conditioning in a car, but bigger.

Many of the stadiums are modular, with demountable seats that will be removed and donated to countries lacking sporting infrastructure once the tournament wraps up. Qatar plans to donate around half of the 380,000 seats from the eight stadiums.

But while Doha's skyline has changed beyond recognition in the last few years, and Qatar as a nation has been propelled onto the world stage, Cahill says the essence of the country is the same.

"I think the change has been from the rest of the world," he says. "People are more open to it. I've always appreciated the values here. It's very traditional. My mum's from Samoa, so I get that. Family is really important here. A country with a culture like this will always carry who they are and be what they are."



Cahill says the Aspire Academy goes some way towards explaining how Qatar, a tiny country, consistently competes on the world stage. The population here in Qatar is under three million. From this pool, the Aspire Academy produces world-class athletes.

“You can imagine the challenge,” says Cahill. “Aspire was built to help the young kids of Qatar follow their dreams.”

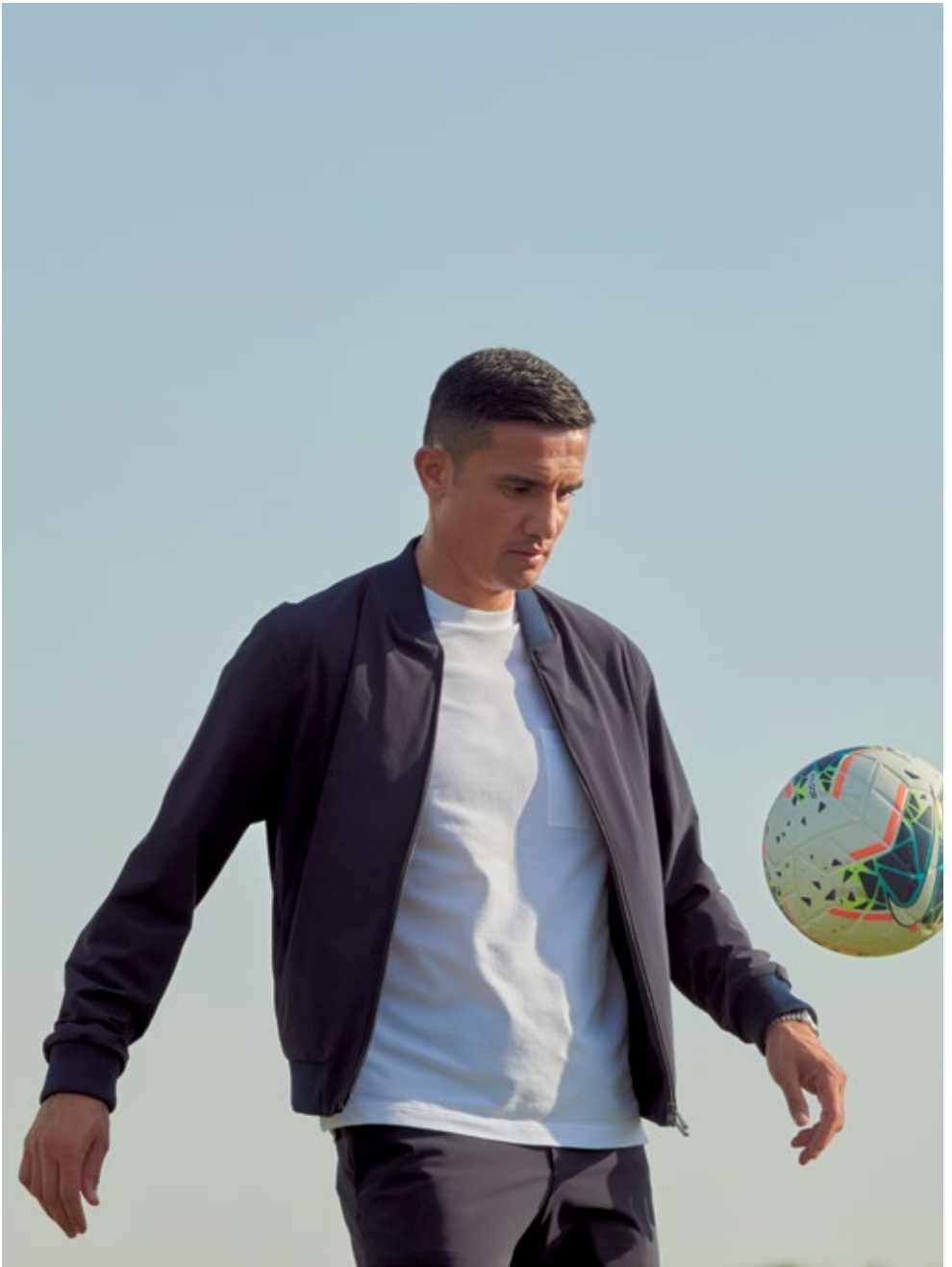
And it’s working. In 2019 Qatar won the AFC Asian Cup Final, defeating Japan 3-1. The previous winners were Cahill’s home country, Australia.

“Australia winning the Asian Cup, with 25 million people, and that sporting culture? That’s massive,” says Cahill. “Qatar winning it?” He trails off and shakes his head. “It’s unbelievable. I can’t get my head around the numbers.”

Cahill puts that down to the way the country nurtures its players. Kids come to Aspire with skill and passion, and Aspire gets them ready for the world.

“Here, they coach with love,” he says. “You have to take care of the players. In Australia, you have a broader field, you can make substitutions. Here, we have to go really specific into the individual. The mental side, the physical side, the growth and maturation.”

It’s not just football that Cahill oversees. As Chief Sports Officer, he is also across swimming, fencing, table tennis and more.



Left: Inside the Aspire Centre. Above: Cahill has played in Australia, China, the UK, the USA and India.

“I’m fortunate enough that I love sport,” he says. “I got to have a hit with the table tennis boys the other day, the young kids. They’ve just had a really successful tournament, winning medals in local competitions.”

And, of course, they’re beating him.

“They are,” he says. “They’re professionals, I’m just happy to be good enough to compete.”

“The most important thing for me is helping these kids follow their dreams,” he says. “I’ll be honest with you, I get excited by that.”

Qatar’s World Cup plans aren’t about the four weeks of the tournament, they’re about building something for the future. The infrastructure commitment is vast and forward-thinking. As well as new roads and the metro system, there are now three to four times as many walkways as there were before the big build. Much of this infrastructure (about 50%) has been built with recycled materials. Where trees have had to be removed, they’ve been replanted somewhere else.

This forward planning is something that Cahill has a lot of time for.

The FIFA World Cup 2022 is an opportunity for Qatar to show itself to the world. And after the last two years of isolation, it’s the ideal place for people to come together.

“Qatar is the hub to the world,” says Cahill. “The stopover everyone takes. But I think people will finally see it with their eyes open.”

The FIFA World Cup 2022 runs from 21 November to 18 December 2022.

The Cup in numbers

- The FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ will see 32 teams play in eight venues over 28 days.
- It's estimated that around one million plus people will visit the country over the four weeks of the tournament—that's about 35% of the entire population of Qatar.
- The new metro system, has three lines and 37 stations, with more on the way.
- Qatar 2022 is the world's first carbon neutral FIFA World Cup.
- After the Cup, the stadiums will be used year-round, including in the hotter months—so temperature control is important. Outdoor cooling technology developed specifically for the FIFA World Cup stadiums is estimated to be 40% more sustainable than existing techniques.
- But it's not just new technology keeping you cool: Al Bayt Stadium was originally designed with a much darker façade, but changing to a lighter colour brought internal temperatures down as much as five degrees.
- Recycled water from the stadiums is being used to irrigate new green spaces. Al Thumama Stadium will be surrounded by 50,000 m² of park area.
- Generation Amazing, an educational programme developed by the Supreme Committee, World Cup organisers using football to educate children in skills like communication, teamwork and gender equality, has now been rolled out to 725,000 young people worldwide.

FIFA World Cup 2022 stadiums

The FIFA World Cup 2022 will be played across eight sustainably-designed stadiums, seating between 40,000 and 80,000 fans in climate-controlled luxury. But they're not just technical wonders, they're also beautiful additions to the cityscape. Here's a rundown of all eight.

Khalifa International Stadium

Capacity: 40,000

Built in 1976, Khalifa has long been the home of football in Qatar. Over the years, it's hosted the Asian Games, Arabian Gulf Cup and AFC Asian Cup. Now, it's the heart of the Aspire Zone, the centre of Qatar's sporting world. For the FIFA World Cup 2022, the stadium has been completely refurbished and given a fresh façade.

Al Bayt Stadium

Capacity: 60,000

Inspired by a traditional nomadic tent design, Al Bayt Stadium is in Al Khor, about 50 km north of Doha. Al Bayt will host the opening match of the tournament and other matches up to the semi-finals. After the Cup, about 28,000 seats will be donated to developing countries and the stadium complex will be refurbished to include a five-star hotel, a shopping centre and a branch of Qatar's renowned Aspetar sports hospital.

Al Thumama Stadium

Capacity: 40,000

The design of this stadium represents the gahfiya, a traditional hat worn by men in the Middle East—though these are usually covered by a ghutra headcloth. After the World Cup, 50% of the seating will be donated to other countries and the upper stands will become a boutique hotel.

Al Janoub Stadium

Capacity: 40,000

Down in the old fishing village of Al Wakrah, this stadium designed by the late Dame Zaha Hadid pays tribute to the dhow boats traditionally used for pearling. Half the seats will be donated after the Cup.

Stadium 974

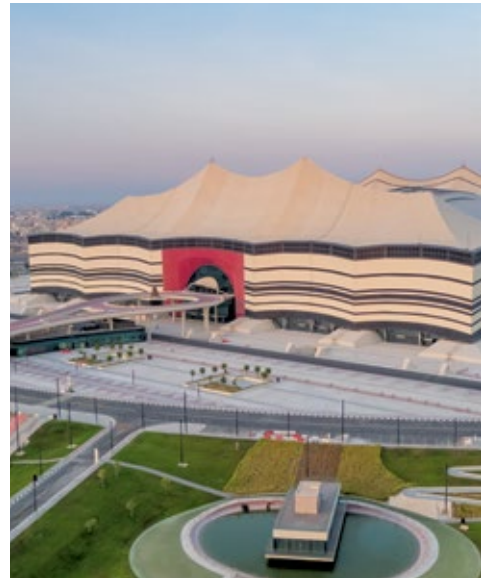
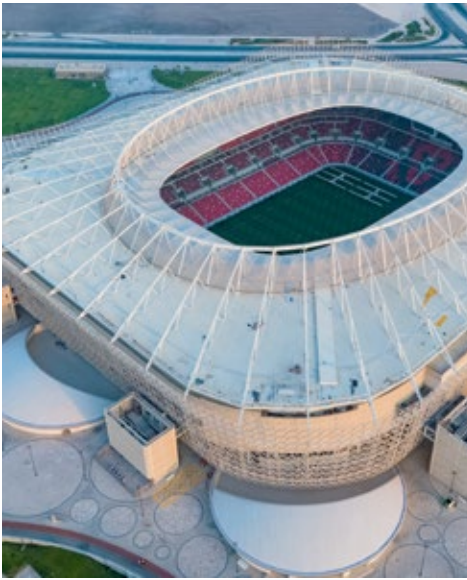
Capacity: 40,000

Built near Qatar's bustling port, Stadium 974 has been built from recycled shipping containers and modular steel, playfully reflecting its surrounds and its unique position as a temporary structure. After the Cup, it will be completely disassembled and many of its component parts will be donated to countries without sporting infrastructure. It's the first fully demountable stadium in World Cup history.

Ahmad bin Ali Stadium

Capacity: 44,740

From outside, the Ahmad bin Ali Stadium glows, illuminating various traditional patterns representing flora and fauna, family and the desert. More than 90% of the materials used in construction are repurposed from the previous stadium on this site. After the Cup, some of the seating will be repurposed in stadiums in Qatar and overseas.



Top left and bottom: Ahmad bin Ali Stadium, in Al Rayyan. Top right: Al Bayt Stadium, in Al Khor.

Education City Stadium

Capacity: 45,350

In the heart of Doha's Education City, surrounded by universities, the Qatar National Library and Sidra hospital, this stadium's diamond-shaped geometric patterns change colour with the position of the sun. It will host games up to the quarter finals.

Lusail Stadium

Capacity: 80,000

The largest stadium in the FIFA World Cup 2022, Lusail Stadium is in the brand new city of Lusail, just north of Doha. The design is based on the shapes of decorative motifs on ancient bowls and other vessels, and takes cues from the 'fanar' lantern. Lusail will host the Cup Final. After that, it will be repurposed into a number of community uses, including a school, housing, shops and a health clinic.

Adventures

Qatar isn't just about football. Its landscape and weather are ideal for all kinds of adventures—including experiences you can't get anywhere else.

Dune bashing in Khor Al Udaid

Dune bashing is a nature tour unlike any other. Four-wheel driving over the vast sand dunes in the country's south is a whole different game to ordinary off-road driving, so we don't recommend you do it yourself. Your safest bet is joining a tour, operating on a half-day, full-day or overnight basis. It's an exhilarating way to see one of the country's most beautiful spots.

Paratriking

Qatar has the ideal conditions for this unique sport, in which you climb into what amounts to a flying machine strapped to a parachute and take to the skies. The desert's flat terrain, stable, low wind, and cushy sand for take-off and landing mean that if you're going to try it, this is the place. You can ride solo or tandem. Alongside the adrenaline rush, you get a beautiful view over the desert and Arabian Gulf.

Kayaking in the Al Thakira Mangroves

The best way to experience this beautiful and popular spot in the country's north is by kayak. Qatar's climate means that there aren't many species of flora endemic to the country, which is what makes Al Thakira such a surprise—the desert gives way to lush green. Cruising through the vegetation, you'll see fish and crustaceans among the pencil roots under the clear water, and herons and flamingos above water. Many tour operators run regular trips, or you could hire a kayak and make your own way. You'll need a car too—it's a bit off-road.

For water-based sport, turn to our guide on page 65.





Left: Safety is a priority for dune bashing. Above: Rolling on the dunes, en route to Khor Al Udaid (the Inland Sea).
Below right: Kayaking in Al Thakira Mangroves. Below left: 4WD dune bashing in Qatar's vast sand dunes.



Other sports

Qatar is home to a very active population and there are plenty of well-equipped sports clubs and activities across the country. Here are just a few highlights.

Doha Golf Club

This 18 hole championship course is open daily from 6am to 9pm, right in the heart of the city. There are PGA professionals on hand for individual and group coaching.

West Bay
+974 4496 0715
dohagolfclub.com

Al Shaqab

Arabian horses are close to the hearts of Qataris. Al Shaqab was established by His Highness The Father Emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani to promote, protect and perpetuate the breed. Al Shaqab hosts regular equestrian and dressage events, in world-class facilities and the Riding Academy offers education and training for ages six and up.

Education City
+974 4544 1992
alshaqab.com

Qatar Chain Reaction

For seasoned cyclists or newbies, Qatar Chain Reaction is a cycling club offering Friday morning rides and weekday track rides at the Losail International Circuit. No registration is necessary. Just show up with your bike. Check the website for times.

qatarchainreaction.com

Al Samriya Riding School

About half an hour west of Doha, this privately-owned equestrian school offers riding lessons for children and adults, and regular trail rides.

Al Shahaniya-Dukhan Road
+974 7797 3397 / +974 4490 2359
alsamriyaestate.com/riding

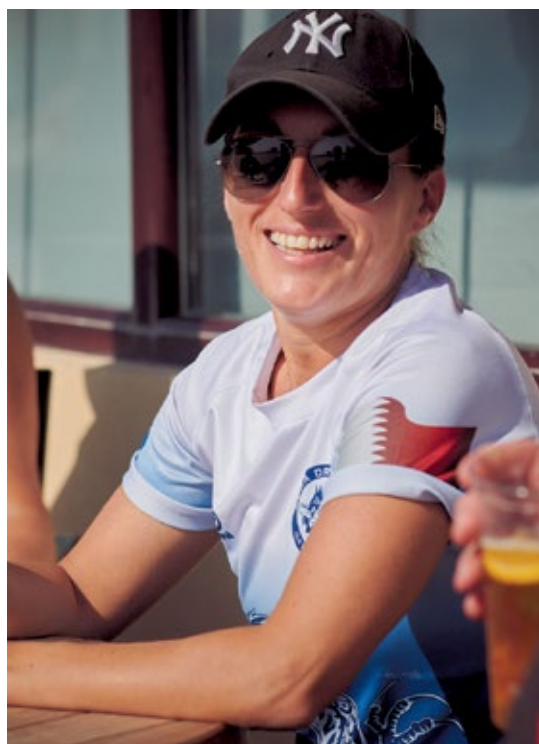
Al Shahaniya Camel Racing

Out in the desert, this extraordinary sport attracts big money bets in Qatar. And since human camel jockeys have been banned, these days the jockeys are all robots. Get to the track early in the morning to see some training, or check the schedules to catch a race—the big competitions are in March and April.

Al Shahaniya
+974 4487 2028

Scan the QR code below for more adventures awaiting you in Qatar.





Clockwise from top left: Cycling with Qatar Chain Reaction; hitting the course at the Doha Golf Club; experiencing one of Qatar's most popular sports—camel racing—at Al Shahaniya; and Doha Dragons' dragon boat team relax after training.

Food

The food scene in Qatar is broad and diverse. Cuisines cross over and mingle, forming new flavours and sensations. Food in Qatar is social. It's built on family, tradition, and centuries of collaboration and influence. From the service to the truly beautiful décor, eating in Qatar is an unforgettable experience.

Take Bayt Sharq, for instance, a restaurant in an old Qatari house, where you can sit and eat Qatari staples like machboos, madrouba and hummus in the communal setting of a traditional Qatari family home.

This issue, we sit down with two prominent chefs in Doha's booming food scene and get to the bottom of Qatari cooking—where it comes from and where it's going.

Looking for fine-dining? Head to global Japanese phenomenon Nobu for their signature black cod in miso, or local favourite Spice Market for South East Asian flavours via the rest of the world.

Something more casual? There are countless restaurants spanning global cuisines, from kebabs in the street to sushi in a skyscraper.

and
dining

Qatar is all about food

Food is at the heart of Qatari life. But what is the essence of Qatari cooking? What sets it apart? And how has Qatar become an international food destination?

To answer these questions, we sat down with two of Qatar's favourite cooks, Chef Noor al Mazroei, who consults on Qatari flavours to some of the best restaurants in the city and runs her own cafe, Blended; and Fawaz Al Omain, chef for acclaimed restaurants SMAT, Jwala and Gahwetna.

Both gave up different careers to dedicate their lives to cooking and both are passionate about Qatari food. As we discover, Qatari food is about more than flavours and goes way beyond the shores of the Arabian Peninsula...



A chef at work at SMAT.



Top: Chef Noor al Mazroei at her cafe, Blended.
Bottom: Chef Fawaz Al Omairi cooking with passion.



How did you start out as a cook?

Noor: I've cooked since I was a child. There weren't many restaurants then. I knew I loved cooking, but it wasn't something you could take as a job in Qatar. You couldn't say to your family that you want to be a chef. It was always expected that I would have an academic degree.

I got a masters' degree in special needs education and this was my career, but cooking was always there on the side. Then I started my social media channel (Instagram: chef_noor_almazroei). It was somewhere I could introduce my cooking, but without my face or an identity. I was just sharing recipes. As my social media became more popular, people in Qatar became more open to having a Qatari female chef cooking.

Fawaz: Cooking was always my hobby. In my younger days in Kuwait it was not acceptable to be a cook or a chef. My mother wanted me to have a degree. She used to forbid me from the kitchen. This is good in a way—the hero of a story always needs an obstacle. If there is no obstacle, you will not know that you love something, or that you're infatuated with it.

And I was infatuated with cooking. I loved it. I was living in the United States, studying marketing and TV production. Miami was a real eye-opener because it's a melting pot, there are a lot of different influences. I used to have two groups of friends. One group was more western. We'd get together and I'd cook for them. The other was my mosque group and I'd cook for them every week. Between the two I started creating dishes spontaneously, and people loved it.

What is the heart of Qatari food?

Fawaz: It's Middle Eastern, Persian, Indian, there's influence from Bedouin culture. We have a lot of rich seafood, Indian spices... It's considered soul food, family food. Qataris love their food. They are willing to go out and eat the same food again and again.

Noor: It's basically a mixture. There are Indian flavours, because that's where our spices have always come from like cardamom, and also Persian spices, like saffron—it's a luxury, it gives a dish added value. So, our food has something from all these cultures.

People always think of Qatari food as heavy, not healthy. This is the idea of Arabic food for a lot of people. But if you look at the roots of Qatari food, it's very clean. It doesn't have a mixture of many things. Rice and chicken, bread with egg, those combinations aren't very difficult. But people overdo it adding so many ingredients. It's just a matter of adding flavour.

How do you approach cooking?

Fawaz: I think about the dimensions of taste, of flavour, of culture, of texture, of presentation. When I want to create a dish, I have to consider those dimensions. It has to be familiar and at the same time unique. I try to find the common denominator, the logic, and create something eclectic.

Madrouba is a dish cooked with rice and chicken with Middle Eastern spices. It has the consistency of baby food, thick like a soup. If you go to Italy, you'll find the same textures. So, we try to find the common denominator in different foods. We find influence everywhere.

The presentation might be French in style, with Indian spices and local ingredients. When you put it all together, it's something new. You try to make it logical.

There is one other important dimension, which is trial and error. That's very important.

Noor: I like to provide Qatari flavours in healthy food. My message is that food is for everyone. I focus on vegan, gluten free and healthy food.

I created my own version of madrouba, which is popular for celebrations, like Eid. So, I did it with oats and spinach—I removed the chicken and the rice. I made this for the Qatar International Food Festival, and on the first day, everyone was skipping my booth, because it's healthy. 'Nooo, we don't want salad!' They went straight to the burgers. On the second day, after more people had tried it, I swear, before I'd even opened there was a whole line. I was bringing out nearly 700 dishes every day. I was crying, I couldn't continue.

You changed 100% of the key ingredients of the madrouba?

Noor: Yes!

And it's still the same dish?

Noor: It has the same flavours and it gives them the same feeling. My message is when you cook healthy, it doesn't have to be flavourless. It should be tasty.

How has Qatar's approach to food changed in recent years?

Noor: In the last ten years restaurants have had a huge leap. In the Middle East now, Qatar is the destination for food. It's amazing. Qatari people have become entrepreneurs. They are the people owning restaurants now. It's not just franchises.

Before, I wanted to travel for food, but now every time I travel I miss the restaurants here. The quality is very high. I went to Italy. The Italian food here, I find it better. I was shocked. The level of the food here is getting very, very high. Everything is here. What you're seeing in America or Australia, you can find it here immediately. Coffee, everything. It's great. This is what we need.



Chef Noor's cafe, Blended.



Top: Chef Noor's cafe, Blended.
Bottom: Selections from Chef Fawaz's menu at SMAT.

Fawaz: I've been living in Qatar for four years. The relationship started before that, but in the last four years I've seen a lot of change. You can see how the government is trying to encourage great restaurants. You can see the influence of younger people, putting themselves in their dishes. There are a lot of things happening in places like Katara, The Pearl, Msheireb... There's influence from all over the world and the government is working to support that.

What are your favourite places to eat out in Qatar?

Noor: It depends what I'm looking for. On the weekend, for fine-dining, I'll go to Nobu, to Hakkasan. If I want something casual, I'll go to Katara, Msheireb, The Pearl, there are tons.

I love Bayt Sharq. It was an old Qatari house. My father used to play there as a child and a year ago it opened as a restaurant. The idea behind it is very Qatari.

Fawaz: One of them is Lo Spaghetti, an authentic Italian restaurant. Or a daily breakfast joint like Shay Al Shoomos. I love that place. Some simple food, great breakfast dishes, very effective. The list goes on.

What's your favourite dish?

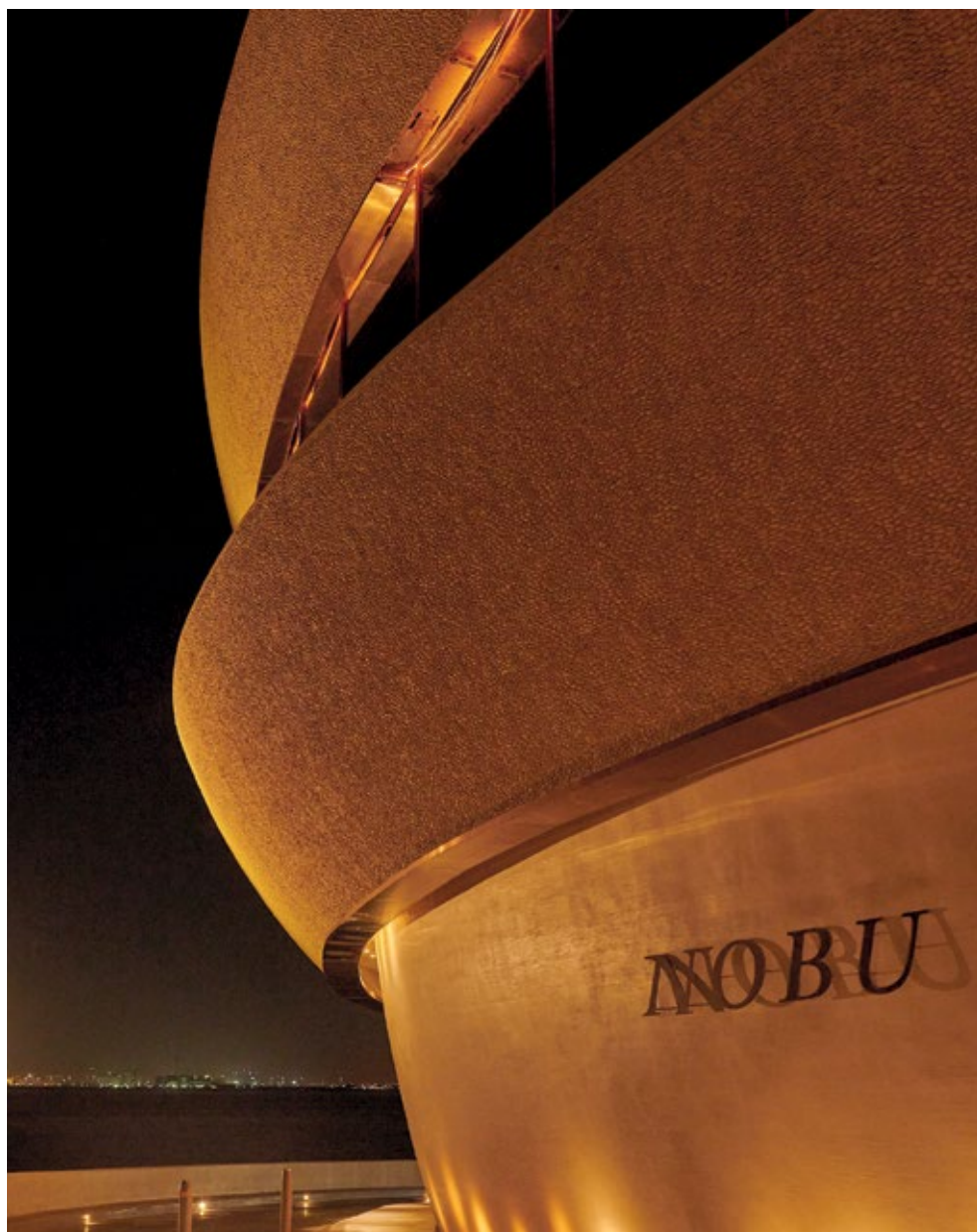
Noor: I like everything, but I love Thai food. It's my comfort. I love the flavours.

Fawaz: A sandwich. With something as small as a sandwich, you can be very creative with it. A sandwich and a cold drink. My favourite is a chicken shawarma with a lot of garlic sauce, or a kebab and kofta. Those are very important to me. Kebab, kofta, sandwich.

Chef Noor is the owner of Blended Cafe and consultant to many other restaurants, including Bayt Sharq.

Chef Fawaz is a chef known for creating the menus at SMAT (Al Corniche), Jwala and Gahwetna (both in The Pearl).

Doha's finest fine-dining



Doha's reputation as a foodie destination is well-earned. Our favourite fine-dining spots span continents and flavour palettes, providing unforgettable dining experiences.



Left and above: Doha's Nobu is the largest in the world and serves some of the city's best sashimi.

Nobu

Chef Nobuyuki "Nobu" Matsuhisa's blending of traditional Japanese dishes with Peruvian ingredients fits right into Doha's international culinary scene. There are a handful of Nobu restaurants around the world and the Doha location is the largest, a freestanding shell-like beacon on its own pier in the Arabian Gulf. Inside, it is sleek, luxurious and has a spectacular view. It's a memorable experience from start to finish, from the architecture to the excellent, knowledgeable service. There are many reasons to love Nobu's signature dish, the black cod in miso—it's sustainably fished, rich in flavour, silky in texture and deceptively simple. But the miso cod isn't the only hero of Nobu, and might not even be your highlight. The foie gras shiitake dumplings (on the tapas menu) and the light and flawless whitefish sashimi are unmissable.

Four Seasons Hotel, Doha, West Bay
+974 4494 8500
noburestaurants.com/doha

Hakkasan Doha

Serving excellent authentic Chinese cuisine, Hakkasan offers an atmospheric, intimate setting, but with music and great service that add a bustling, casual atmosphere. The set signature menus pick out a few highlights, but it's worth delving into the à la carte. There's a lot of variety. Don't miss the dim sum platter, the pick of which is the har gau with black truffle (decorated with a touch of gold leaf), the spicy prawn curry with lemongrass sauce, or the seabass with honey. And don't stop after the main—push yourself to order dessert and try the coconut semifreddo with just a hint of lemon and mint.

The St. Regis Doha, West Bay Lagoon
+974 4446 0170
hakkasan.com/doha

La Mar

Chef Gastón Acurio's Peruvian food is inspired by centuries of different cultural influences including Japanese, Italian and Chinese, and yet it all comes out distinctly Peruvian. Served in a high-ceilinged, casual-feeling bistro on the waterfront, La Mar feels very unpretentious, with down-to-earth dishes and good serving sizes. The highlights here are the fresh seafood, particularly the white fish with concha. And you should definitely try the several takes on the Peruvian national dish, cebiche, which mixes raw fish with lime juice and other flavours including onion, cubes of sweet potato and plantain chips. Order a cebiche tasting plate and share. There are also fantastic beverages on offer.

InterContinental Doha, West Bay Lagoon
+974 4484 4919
doha.intercontinental.com/la-mar

Liang

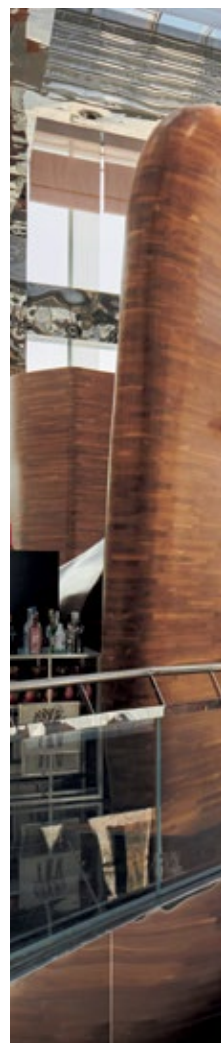
This atmospheric and memorable restaurant serves some of the best Eastern flavours in Qatar. Part of Hong Kong's renowned Maxim's Group, Liang serves authentic Cantonese and more in a traditional setting, with performative elements that add an edge of cultural education. Watch as chefs perform the traditional creation of *la mian*, expertly transforming raw dough into noodles, and as tea is served traditionally, involving a performance blending martial arts and dance. Highlights include the wagyu beef short ribs, kung pao tiger prawns, wok-fried spicy chicken and their signature Peking duck. And it's all served with an ever-replenished supply of green tea.

Mandarin Oriental, Msheireb
+974 4008 8888
mandarinoriental.com/doha/msheireb/fine-dining/restaurant/chinese/liang

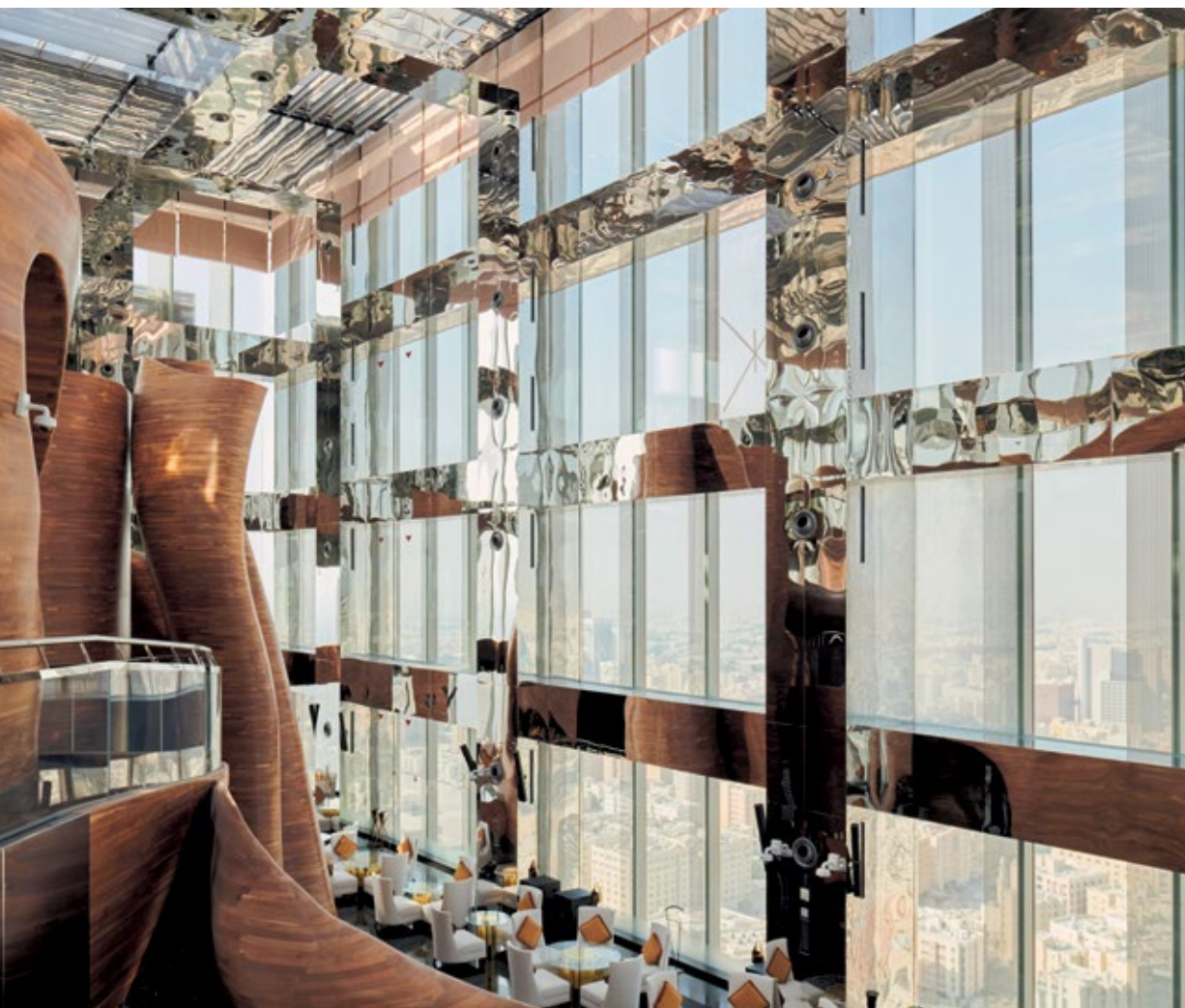
Spice Market

This lively and popular restaurant in the heart of West Bay spans the flavours of South East Asia. It's one of the best-loved in Doha, having won multiple awards since it opened a decade ago, including several best restaurant awards from the likes of *Time Out Doha* and the BBC. The place has a very social atmosphere and there are plenty of menu options designed to share, like bento boxes, dim sum and sushi. Try the black pepper shrimp with sun-dried pineapple and the ginger fried rice. Spice Market also offers a hugely popular brunch.

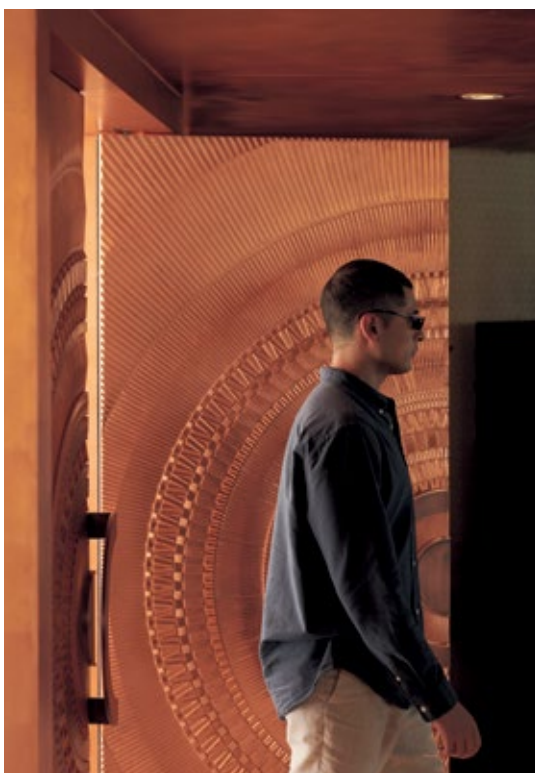
W Doha Hotel & Residences, West Bay
+974 4453 5135
spicemarketdoha.com



Vertigo is Doha's hottest new restaurant and it's easy to see why. From up on the 28th floor, you have great panoramic views over Doha's skyline, but the inside deserves just as much attention, with a lavish fit-out by French interior designer Jacques Garcia, including a retractable roof. That's before we even mention the creative drink selections and Pan-Asian cuisine menu.



Above: The view is special inside and out at Vertigo. Right: The cebiche at La Mar.



Scenes from Morimoto (top left) and B-lounge (top right and bottom).

Other great fine-dining options

More fine-dining venues are opening all the time. These are also well worth a visit.

Morimoto

Iron Chef Masaharu Morimoto's Japanese fine-dining spot is as lavish and dramatic as you'd expect from his TV show.

Mondrian Doha, West Bay Lagoon

+974 4045 5999

sbe.com/hotels/mondrian/doha/dining/
morimoto

Em Sherif

The Sheraton Grand is an iconic hotel in West Bay and at the top of it is one of the city's most iconic dining experiences. The traditional Lebanese dishes are exceptional, and they're served amidst antique decor and a great view over the Corniche.

Sheraton Grand, West Bay

+974 4488 8236

emsherif.com

BiBo

Dani Garcia's Andalusian-style brasserie serves croquettes, whole fried sea bass and tapas, all drawing on Mediterranean recipes and family traditions.

Al Gassar Resort, West Bay Lagoon

+974 4424 4870

grupodanigarcia.com/en/bibo-restaurants/
bibo-doha

Izu

Overlooking Msheireb's Barahat town square, Izu (named for its celebrity chef Izu Ani) offers French Mediterranean cuisine including beef tartar, spicy marinated lamb and fresh seafood.

Mandarin Oriental, Msheireb

+974 4008 8888

mandarinoriental.com/doha/msheireb/fine-
dining/restaurants/french-mediterranean/izu

Zengo

This elegantly avian-themed fine-dining venue is high up on the 61st floor, overlooking West Bay. You'll find innovative Asian food from celebrity chef Richard Sandoval, with sushi, curry and wok-fried dishes.

Kempinski Residences & Suites, West Bay

+974 4405 3560

zengodoha.com

Coya

Luxurious Peruvian restaurant Coya has been a favourite in London, Paris, Monte Carlo and Abu Dhabi. The recently-opened Doha location is always buzzing.

W Doha Hotel & Residences, West Bay

+974 4453 5416

coyarestaurant.com/doha

B-lounge

Facing The Ritz-Carlton, Doha's own private marina, B-lounge specialises in Asian fusion food, served to share.

The Ritz-Carlton, Doha, The Pearl

+974 5080 4421

bloungedoha.com

Nusr-Et

Internet celebrity chef Nusret Gökçe (a.k.a. Salt Bae) is known for more than just his inimitable cool and unusual seasoning methods. His luxury Nusr-Et Turkish steakhouses are a staple of the region.

Sheraton Grand Doha Resort & Convention
Hotel, West Bay

+974 4442 9339

nusr-et.com.tr

Qatar's best mid-price restaurants

You'll find exceptional food everywhere in Qatar, no matter your budget. These are among the best—including some of our favourite Qatari and Arabic restaurants.

Bayt Sharq

Serving traditional Qatari food in the setting of a traditional Qatari home is an irresistible premise, and Bayt Sharq delivers. Staples like tabbouleh, tannour bread and lamb with rice and yoghurt are just perfect here—homely, flavoursome and nourishing. You can dine in the main room or in one of several private dining rooms all opening up onto the courtyard. There's also a mini-museum at the centre, displaying artefacts from the home's history.

Al Corniche

+974 7770 4589

[instagram.com/baytsharq.qa](https://www.instagram.com/baytsharq.qa)

Boho Social

This chic, popular spot right in Katara is known for its social vibe and great views. Inside, it's a riot of colour and patterns. Outside, you've got unbeatable views over the ocean. There's plenty of variety on the menu too, with Asian, South American and Middle Eastern flavours, vegan options and great mocktails.

Katara Cultural Village

+974 4408 0543

[bohosocialqatar.com](https://www.bohosocialqatar.com)

Bayt El Talleh

Atop the lush green north hill in Katara, Bayt El Talleh serves fixed menus of authentic Levantine cuisine. Come for breakfast, lunch or dinner—the menus may be set but there's a huge amount of variety on offer. Dine outdoors for a stunning

view over the parkland, the bay and the towers of The Pearl.

Katara Cultural Village

+974 4408 1777

[akh.com.qa/brands/bayt-el-talleh](https://www.akh.com.qa/brands/bayt-el-talleh)

Nourlaya

There aren't a lot of restaurants in Doha serving excellent contemporary Sri Lankan food, so lucky we have Nourlaya. Right in the heart of Msheireb, Nourlaya is a very popular spot, serving great food in a great location. Try the prawn curry with the rosewater-infused taptan bread.

Msheireb

+974 7076 7780

[instagram.com/nourlaya.qa](https://www.instagram.com/nourlaya.qa)

SMAT

Located on top of Orient Pearl right across the Corniche from the ocean, SMAT is known for its Khaleeji and Qatari fusion dishes. You won't find a regular hummus or an average machbous here. Try the machbous al shuyoukh for perfectly fall-from-the-bone beef ribs slow-braised for six hours, and the samboussas (you might know them as samosas), filled with cheese, potato or lamb. The grape leaf hummus is also a winner.

Above the Orient Pearl, Al Corniche

+974 4410 6600

[instagram.com/smatrestaurant](https://www.instagram.com/smatrestaurant)



Clockwise from top left: Entering Megu; al fresco dining at Boho Social; a full table at Bayt Sharq; and some perfect tannour bread at Bayt El Talleh.



Other top-quality mid-budget eats

We couldn't stop at five—there are countless mid-budget restaurants with great food and lively atmospheres.

Lo Spaghetti

This cute Italian trattoria is all about authentic Italian food, served in a beautiful green terrace dining area.

Al Sadd

+974 4434 1601

[instagram.com/lo_spaghetti_doha](https://www.instagram.com/lo_spaghetti_doha)

Megu

Try some tasty contemporary Japanese dishes with beautiful views over the turquoise waters of The Pearl Marina.

Porto Arabia, The Pearl

+974 4409 5237

hdc-global.com/restaurants/megu-modern-japanese-cuisines/

Damascas One

Some of the city's best Arabic food is served here, with a view over Souq Waqif.

Souq Waqif

+974 4475 9089

[instagram.com/damascasone](https://www.instagram.com/damascasone)

Yasmine Palace

This brightly-coloured palace of a restaurant serves Syrian Levantine food, sometimes with live music.

Porto Arabia, The Pearl

+974 7711 1504

[yasminepalace.com](https://www.yasminepalace.com)

Jwala

A fusion Indian street food restaurant with walls adorned with Bollywood kitsch, Jwala offers an Indian take on a Caesar salad, naan pizza and a rangoli chicken lollipop.

Qanat Quartier, The Pearl

+974 4437 8437

[jwalarestaurant.com](https://www.jwalarestaurant.com)

Evergreen Organics

The first completely vegan cafe in Qatar offers a healthy all-day menu including salads, sandwiches and bowls. And sweet treats can be vegan too—try the chocolate torte.

Qanat Quartier, The Pearl

+974 4472 0437

[evergreenorganics.qa](https://www.evergreenorganics.qa)



Left: The dining room at Yasmine Palace. Right: Evergreen Organics serves some of the city's best vegan food.

Mamig

Serving Lebanese-Armenian food, Mamig is a great place to explore a new cuisine—try the set menu for a sample of everything Armenian.

Katara Cultural Village
+974 4408 0800
mamigdoha.com

Orient Pearl

Across the road from the Corniche, the Orient Pearl is set among beautiful gardens and water features (lit up beautifully at night), and serves great Lebanese and Syrian food.

Corniche
+974 4410 6600
orientpearlqatar.com

La Casa Twenty Eight

This Mediterranean restaurant serves some fantastic pasta, pizza and paella.

Qanat Quartier, The Pearl
+974 4415 3333
lacasa28.com

Soy by Sato

Serving fusion Asian dishes, including tapas from dumplings to bao. Mains include Asian risotto, braised Thai short ribs and a black miso cod.

Porto Arabia, The Pearl
+974 4436 5638
instagram.com/soybysato

Qatar's top four budget and street food eats

Being on a budget doesn't mean skimping on quality and flavour—some of our favourite spots in Qatar offer top quality for low prices. Make sure you try a cup of sweet karak tea, an Indian drink adopted by Qataris and deeply rooted in Qatari culture.

Shay Al Shoomos

In Souq Waqif, this unassuming little cafe run by Shams Al-Qassabi is notable for a few reasons. Firstly, because it's the first Qatari cafe owned and operated by a Qatari woman. But mainly, because these simple, homecooked dishes are some of the best traditional Qatari food you'll find. This is a popular breakfast spot with locals, but it's open all day. Try the regag, a kind of Arabic crepe served with savoury or sweet toppings. Al Qassabi has won awards for her business nous and her food—come find out why.

Souq Waqif
+974 4444 2824
[instagram.com/shay_alshomous/](https://www.instagram.com/shay_alshomous/)

Tea Time

You'll see branches of Tea Time absolutely everywhere in Qatar. This takeaway chain offers good sandwiches, burgers, and tea and coffee. We also recommend the six riyal chocolate soufflé—and you have to sample the Qatari staple, hot, sweet, karak chai.

Various locations
[teatime.qa](https://www.teatime.qa)



Traditional Turkish tea.



Shay Al Shoomos is one of Souq Waqif's best cafes for traditional Qatari food and a cup of sweet karak tea.

Three Peppers

This great, cheap Chinese restaurant in the Al Muntazah Trading Centre provides good quality mainland Chinese staples including pan-fried dumplings, hot pot and fried rice dishes.

Al Muntazah Trading Centre
+974 6649 2626
[facebook.com/Threepeppersqatar](https://www.facebook.com/Threepeppersqatar)

Falafel Al Akawi

Serving a selection of classic vegetarian Arabic dishes and delivering across town, Falafel Al Akawi is a hugely popular takeaway cafe.

Various locations
[instagram.com/falafel.alakawi](https://www.instagram.com/falafel.alakawi)

12 hidden gems

Here are a handful of places you won't see listed in the guidebooks. A bit off-track, a bit less touristy, these are the local secrets.



Top left: The thali plate at Gokul Gujarati.
Top right: Staff at Basta, The Pearl.
Bottom: The grand entrance at Parisa.

Shujaa

Tucked away in an alleyway in Souq Waqif is this hole-in-the-wall kebab spot serving superb kebabs. Order a mixed grill, some hummus, yoghurt and arugula leaves, take a seat and enjoy the company of locals. This is simple food, done well, in a lively setting.

Souq Waqif

Jabal Lebnen

Serving excellent takeaway Lebanese cuisine, Jabal Lebnen is the place for grilled meat, shawarma sandwiches and Lebanese pastries.

Al Mirqab Al Jadeed
+974 4442 1704

Baladna Restaurant

Baladna is a well-known dairy farming company in Qatar. Their restaurant serves excellent Syrian food made with very fresh ingredients. Come by for breakfast and try the manakeesh (a Middle Eastern equivalent of a pizza), labneh balls, or just share a full Baladna tray to sample the lot.

The Pearl
+974 5000 8872
[instagram.com/baladnarest](https://www.instagram.com/baladnarest)

Mama Rozie

Right down the road from Three Peppers is Mama Rozie, a family-run South East Asian eatery (Indonesian, Malaysian and Filipino) serving an excellent nasi goreng and gado gado (a salad with peanut sauce).

Al Muntazah, Doha
+974 7045 6262
mama-rozie-restaurant.business.site

Beirut

This simple traditional Lebanese spot has excellent pastries and some of the best hummus in Qatar.

Fereej Bin Mahmoud
+974 4435 5258

Basta

There are a few Bastas around town, all serving the same great traditional Qatari food. Try the excellent mal awal (a kind of ground chicken stewed with rice) and the majboos.

Mall of Qatar, The Pearl and Souq Waqif
[instagram.com/basta.qatar](https://www.instagram.com/basta.qatar)

Gahwetna

Gahwetna serves perfect, simple modern Qatari wraps, tannour pizzas and fried samboussas.

The Pearl
+974 3329 0600
[facebook.com/GahwetnaQA](https://www.facebook.com/GahwetnaQA)

Argan

You'll find excellent Moroccan dishes here. Located in Souq Waqif, the tagines and couscous dishes are highlights.

Souq Waqif
+974 7047 3687
[tivolihotels.com/en/souq-waqif-doha/restaurants/argan](https://www.tivolihotels.com/en/souq-waqif-doha/restaurants/argan)

Parisa Souq Waqif

This grand restaurant tucked away in Souq Waqif might just have the most striking decor of any restaurant in Qatar. Serving excellent Iranian food.

Souq Waqif
+974 4441 1494
[ritzcarlton.com/en/hotels/qatar/sharq-village/dining/parisa-souq-waqif](https://www.ritzcarlton.com/en/hotels/qatar/sharq-village/dining/parisa-souq-waqif)

Bandar Aden

This traditional Yemeni restaurant serves salta and fahsa stews. You can even eat traditional-style, sitting cross-legged on the ground.

Al Jasra, Souq Waqif
+974 4437 5503
bandaraden.com

Gokul Gujarati

This no-frills tasty Indian restaurant specialising in Gujarati cuisine (a state in India's west) serves a thali plate with unlimited servings for just 25 riyals.

Fereej Bin Mahmoud North
+974 4480 0373
[facebook.com/gokulgujarati](https://www.facebook.com/gokulgujarati)

Sofra

Serving top-quality Levantine food with an unbeatable view over Souq Waqif. Their brunch comes highly recommended.

Msheireb
+974 4009 9999
[alwadihoteldoha.com/restaurants-bars/sofra](https://www.alwadihoteldoha.com/restaurants-bars/sofra)

Ten Insta-worthy eating spots



Food that looks as good as it tastes, and settings you'll want to capture for your friends.

Tea Garden

This stylish cafe in the iconic Torch building serves afternoon tea and mocktails with an excellent view from the 21st floor.

Aspire Zone

thetorchdoha.com.qa/dining/torch-tea-garden

EL&N London

The Doha branch of 'the most Instagrammable cafe in the world' delivers all the pink floral decor your followers can handle, alongside mouth-watering cakes.

Msheireb

[instagram.com/elan_cafe](https://www.instagram.com/elan_cafe)

Cloud & Co

In downtown Msheireb, this little artisanal gelato place has some of the coolest and most colourful interior design in Doha, complete with a little ball pit.

Msheireb

[instagram.com/cloudandco_](https://www.instagram.com/cloudandco_)

Gastronomy

A vibrant West Bay cafe serving great lunch and specialty coffee in a minimalist, industrial-chic space.

West Bay

[instagram.com/gastronomyqa](https://www.instagram.com/gastronomyqa)

Blended Cafe

Founder, Chef Noor al Mazroei, believes in strong, traditional Qatari flavours served with a healthy twist. Her cafe Blended offers a curated menu of colourful, clean-eating dishes in a contemporary setting, with excellent coffee and treats, including baklava and brookies (brownie cookies).

Fereej Al Ali

+974 5075 9590

[instagram.com/blended.qa](https://www.instagram.com/blended.qa)

Rusk

This sophisticated European-style bakery in Msheireb serves coffee, baguettes, bagels and excellent people-watching. A great place to sit for the afternoon.

Msheireb

[instagram.com/rusk.qa](https://www.instagram.com/rusk.qa)

Rosemary Cafe

Out on the piazza at the luxury shopping destination Al Hazm mall, hit Rosemary Cafe to take tea beneath a canopy of pink flowers.

Al Hazm Mall

[instagram.com/rosemarycafe.qa](https://www.instagram.com/rosemarycafe.qa)

Flat White

Serving one of the best flat whites in Doha, this chain takes coffee seriously, with drinks and food worth photographing and sharing.

Various locations

[instagram.com/flatwhite.qa](https://www.instagram.com/flatwhite.qa)

Upside Down Cafe

The decor in this spatially-confusing cafe in West Bay is less concerned about the limits of gravity than most. Have a coffee on the ceiling.

West Bay

[instagram.com/upsidedown.qa](https://www.instagram.com/upsidedown.qa)

Lusail Marina Food Arena

This small park in Lusail has been brought to life by dozens of shipping containers converted into kitchens serving every kind of food. See also the neon lights of the Tasty Street market in Katara. Both are great spots for grabbing some takeaway before heading to the waterfront.

Lusail

[instagram.com/marina_food_arena](https://www.instagram.com/marina_food_arena)

Katara

[instagram.com/tasty.street.qa](https://www.instagram.com/tasty.street.qa)

Clockwise from top left: A meal at Flat White; mocktails at Rosemary cafe; serving up at Lusail Night Market; the colours of EL&N London.

Happy hour: Five sunset spots

As the sun sets over the desert, here are five spots to while away the last moments of the day with an apéritif before dinner.

Sora

This Japanese restaurant and lounge offers a casual sophistication and a great view over downtown Msheireb.

Park Hyatt Doha, Msheireb Downtown Doha
+974 4009 4330
hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/qatar/park-hyatt-doha/dohph/dining

Iris

Lounge by the ocean at this vibey outdoor bar serving handcrafted beverages.

Sharq Village, Al Khulaifat
+974 5515 1339
ritzcarlton.com/en/hotels/qatar/sharq-village/dining/iris

Zengo

This fine-dining spot high up on the 61st floor gives you a bird's eye view over the city while you sample some excellent drink options. Come back during the day for their brunch (sorry, zunch).

Kempinski Residences & Suites, West Bay
+974 4405 3560
zengodoha.com

Belgian Café

With great views over the Arabian Gulf, this bar serves fries, mussels and burgers, as well as imported Belgian drinks.

InterContinental Doha, West Bay Lagoon
+974 4484 4919
doha.intercontinental.com/belgian-cafe

STK Doha The Ritz-Carlton, Doha

This modern steakhouse on the 23rd floor of The Ritz-Carlton, Doha is a great place to kick back at happy hour, with refreshing beverages and perfect steaks.

The Ritz-Carlton, Doha, West Bay Lagoon
+974 4484 8588
stk-doha.com



Sunset over West Bay.

For more food and dining inspiration,
scan the QR code below.



The five best brunches in Doha

The latest dining trend in Qatar is to assemble a crew and descend upon a restaurant on a weekend for an early-afternoon all-you-can-eat-and-drink feast. Here are some of the best places to brunch.

Spice Market

Hailed by locals as the best brunch spot, Spice Market's fun atmosphere is augmented by plenty of food stations and an in-house DJ.

W Doha Hotel & Residences, West Bay
+974 4453 5135
spicemarketdoha.com

The St. Regis Doha

Leading chefs from three of The St Regis Doha's restaurants serve up 16 food stations, nine drink stations and live music.

The St. Regis Doha, West Bay Lagoon
+974 4446 0105
vinedoha.com

JW Marriott Marquis City Center Doha

There are two options at the Marriott: enjoy a pre-plated Latin American brunch at Fuego, or head up to Shanghai Club on the 43rd floor for all-you-can-eat sushi, Peking duck, mango sticky rice and much more.

JW Marriott Marquis City Center, West Bay
+974 5506 2798
marriott.com.au/hotels/hotel-information/restaurant/dohmq-marriott-marquis-city-center-doha-hotel

B-lounge

Exceptional Asian fusion food, with great mixed beverages, out-of-the-ordinary mocktails and an unbeatable view.

The Ritz-Carlton, Doha, The Pearl
+974 5080 4421
bloungedoha.com

Sofra

Specialising in Levantine food, Sofra has a great atmosphere and great view over Souq Waqif.

Msheireb
+974 4009 9999
alwadihoteldoha.com/restaurants-bars/sofra

Brunch mocktails at B-lounge.



Qatar then, now and to come

Qatar is a nation of incredible contrast. Nowhere else in the world can you see the makings of one of the world's great metropolises literally rising from the desert with unparalleled speed and precision while holding on to its proud history, heritage and culture. In this photographic essay we explore the city, desert and coast to uncover how the country's past, present and future seamlessly interact to create a place quite unlike anywhere else in the world right now.







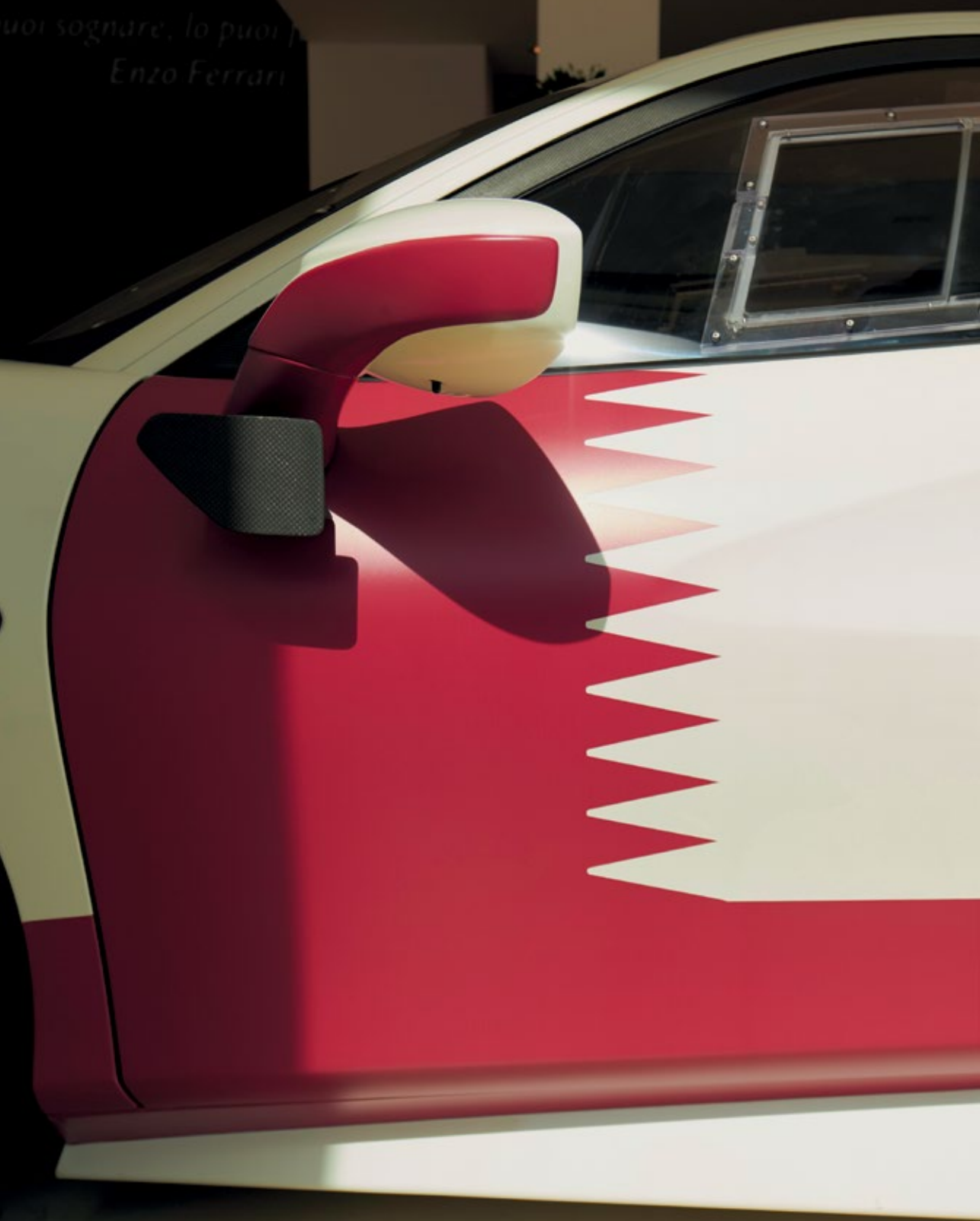








uoi sognare, lo puoi
Enzo Ferrari









ممنوع من الدراجات
Cyclists
Prohibited











Wellness

Luxury is serious business in Qatar, from the hotels to shopping, but personal care is where Qataris really excel. You'll experience pampering and wellness on a grand scale, from a palace within an oasis to yoga atop a skyscraper. One of our favourites is Qatar's five-star wellness resort Al Messila, a Luxury Collection Resort & Spa, Doha (see page 150). Built among the sidra trees of a natural oasis, inside you'll find a palatial spa, including a luxuriously exclusive ladies-only experience.

We also take a look at Zual Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som, a new wellness resort in Qatar's north. Zual goes beyond pampering, taking a holistic approach to your health and helping you make lasting changes to your lifestyle.

And on Banana Island (turn to page 151), where the Doha skyline is just a hazy mirage in the distance, you'll find the kind of desert island paradise you thought only existed in daydreams, complete with golden sands and lapping water. From spa treatments to bootcamp, there's something for every taste, every speed and every body.

s

and
spas

Qatar's speciality retreats

Sometimes you need to just get away from it all to rest, recover and revitalise. When that moment arrives, it's time to visit one of these holistic health and wellness retreats that will get you ready to return to the world with a new sense of invigoration.

Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som

Far from the city, in the pristine Khasooma region in Qatar's north, Zulal offers more than a holiday—it's a welcome retreat from daily life. Global wellness brand Chiva-Som's new resort promises to be unlike anything else in Qatar.

For one, at 280,000 m² it's the largest resort of its kind in Qatar. Built around a lagoon right near the beach, Zulal offers everything you might expect at a retreat, from pools to spa treatments. But the main draw is its premise as a holistic wellness retreat where pampering is just one small part of the approach, which includes treatments based upon TRADITIONAL ARABIC & ISLAMIC MEDICINE.

Zulal focuses on six modalities of wellness—physiotherapy, nutrition, holistic health, fitness, spa and aesthetics—and invites you to make lasting changes to your lifestyle. Nutrition, fitness and mental health are all given attention, ensuring the benefits of your treatment last well beyond your check-out date. And digital detox is encouraged for the duration

of your stay, with guests invited to switch off their phones and be in the moment, whether it be with family or with nature.

There are two paths to Zulal. Serenity (for ages 16+) offers calm and private spaces, and personally guided treatments and activities. And Discovery offers an experience dedicated to families, a chance for families to bond, reconnect and grow closer as a unit, with a mixture of playful education, fun, sports, meditation, creative arts and dietary advice, as well as Arabic and Qatari-influenced treatments tailored to parents and their children.

Each has dedicated programmes of health and wellness, facilities, as well as separate dining options. There are also health and wellness centres with treatment rooms, a fitness pavilion, and Pilates and physiotherapy suites, all catering to men and women.

And it's all just a 90 minute drive from Doha (or quicker by chartered helicopter straight from Hamad International Airport). You'll leave revived and clear-headed.

zulal.com



The world-class wellness experience at Zula.

Al Messila, a Luxury Collection Resort & Spa, Doha

The trees and blooming flowers surrounding Al Messila resort are a burst of calm and cool from the sidras to acacia and mimosa trees. Nestled among the lush gardens of a natural oasis in the heart of Doha, Qatar's premier five-star resort builds on the beauty of its natural setting.

Between the natural grounds and the luxurious facilities, from the architecture, a mix of Arabic and European design, to the near 15,000 m² of spa facilities, Al Messila is a hugely popular staycation spot for Qataris and the country's definitive statement in luxury. In Arabic, Al Messila means "where water flows"—and the cooling presence (and relaxing sound) of flowing water is everywhere in Al Messila, from the greenery to the water features and pools.

In an Al Messila spa treatment, attention to detail is key and every moment is to be savoured, from your personal masseuse to the lavish afternoon tea at the treatment's end. The palatial entrance and foyer only hint at the grandeur behind closed doors, where high ceilings create volume and a sense of otherworldliness. And "Standard" spa rooms are anything but standard: these large rooms come with their own changing spaces, showers and facilities, for maximum privacy.

And that's before we get to the true heart of Al Messila, the ladies-only spa concept, The Worlds—four discrete spas within a spa, each differently themed: Oriental, Mystic, Floral and Mineral. Surprises include a sound-and-light based relaxation space, mineral pools, a traditional hammam and a vast pink Himalayan salt room. This can all be experienced solo, or in double suites for a special afternoon with a friend.

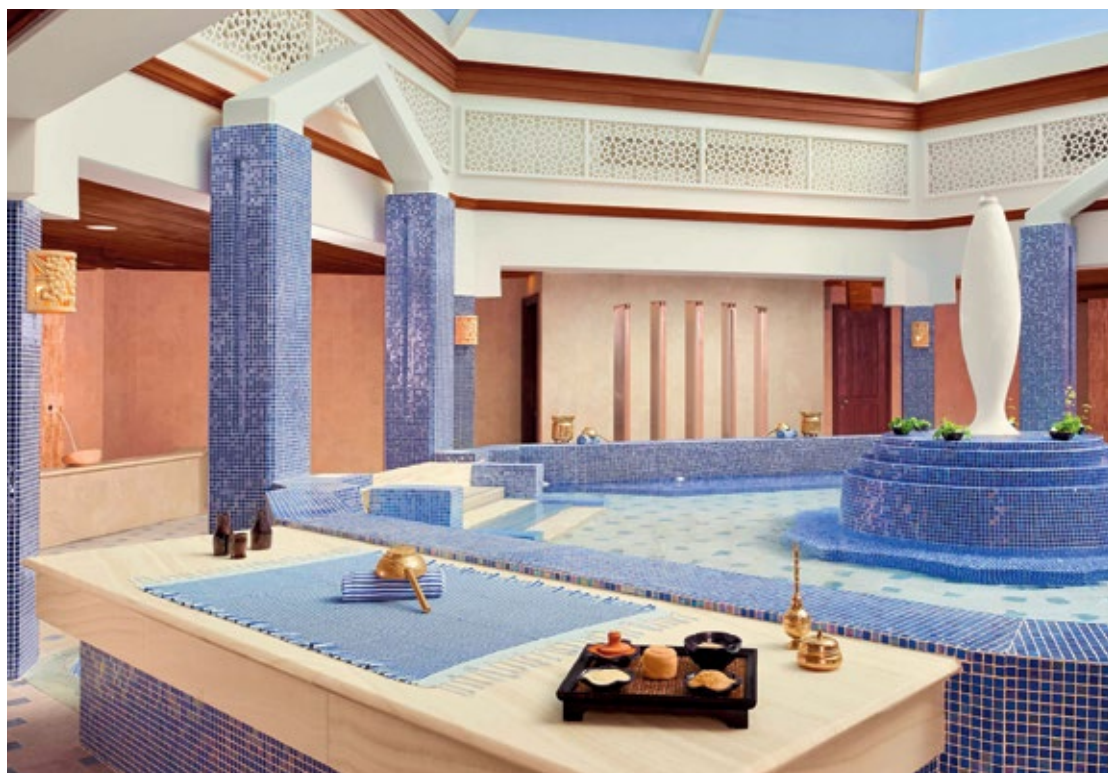
For the more active visitor, there is a comprehensive gym, spinning studio, movement studio, Pilates studio and space for personal training, and the grounds are the perfect jogging spot. The resort runs numerous bootcamp programmes and has recently converted its tennis courts into padel courts—a hybrid of beach tennis and squash currently taking Europe by storm.

Al Messila has three restaurants and 122 hotel rooms, from deluxe rooms to 30 premium villas in the grounds, each with its own plunge pool and garden. All the facilities are available to day visitors, but with the lingering sound of running water, the scent of lemongrass and the profound sense of calm, you might want to invest in a room.

Zone 36, Street 827, Building 21
+974 4445 0000
almessiladoha.com



Al Messila offers the expansive (left) and the intimate (right).



Anantara Spa at Banana Island Resort.

Banana Island Resort Doha by Anantara

Just a 25 minute ferry ride from downtown Doha is a tiny crescent-shaped island in the Arabian Gulf dedicated entirely to luxury and relaxation. It's the kind of spot you dream of when imagining the perfect holiday. And it's real.

As you approach land, the first thing you'll see is the beach—800 m of golden sands, decked with chairs, canopies and beach volleyball nets.

The rooms and suites, many of which are right on the water, are luxurious without being over the top, with the feel of a seaside retreat. Upmarket, but not audaciously grand.

You can choose to relax, head for a massage or a spell in the hammam and then lounge among the palm trees, or get active. As well as tennis, beach volleyball, a putting green and a fitness centre inland, there's an active

programme of kayaking, wakeboarding and water-skiing. The resort also has its own marina, surf pool and dive centre.

Being an alcohol-free resort, it's also very family friendly. Between the kids' waterpark, the bowling alley, the cinema and the kids' clubs with qualified childminders, little ones will not be short of entertainment.

And of course, the city is just a short hop away any time. At the other end of the 25 minute ferry ride, you'll be right by the National Museum of Qatar, the Museum of Islamic Art, the bustling Souq Waqif and the boutiques of Msheireb Downtown Doha. But with 3 km of ocean between you and the city, it may as well be on a different continent.

Banana Island
+974 4040 5050
anantara.com/en/banana-island-doha

The best hotel spas

You don't need to leave your hotel to find top-tier spa facilities. Head down from your room or get a day pass for these gems.

Remède Spa, The St. Regis Doha

Voted Best Luxury Beach Resort Spa in the Middle East & North Africa in the 2019 World Luxury Spa Awards, Remède boasts 22 private treatment rooms, a hydro pool, steam rooms, relaxation lounges and couples' rooms.

A selection of treatments employ techniques inspired by Arabian traditions, including using local ingredients to soothe and pamper.

There's also a full gym, male and female steam rooms and a pool overlooking The St. Regis Doha's private beach.

The St. Regis Doha, West Bay Lagoon
+974 4446 0300
remedespadoha.com

ESPA Spa, Mondrian Doha

The only Doha location of the globally-renowned ESPA brand is also the world's largest, spread over 6,700 m² with 11 treatment rooms and a traditional Turkish hammam. Along with traditional spa treatments, ESPA offers oxygen therapy, detoxifying not just your pores, but also your lungs. ESPA also boasts a luxurious couples' package.

Mondrian Doha, West Bay Lagoon
+974 4045 5555
sbe.com/hotels/mondrian/doha/espa-spa

The Spa at Park Hyatt Doha

The Spa at the new Park Hyatt Doha offers bespoke treatments and a luxurious wet area with mood showers, whirlpool, sauna, and steam and ice rooms. It's all spread across two floors—one for women and one for men. Beyond that, there's even a virtual reality programme, complementing your wellness experience with well-chosen sounds and images.

Park Hyatt Doha, Sikkat Wadi Msheireb Street,
Msheireb Downtown Doha
+974 4009 1234
hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/qatar/park-hyatt/dohph

Sharq Village & Spa, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel

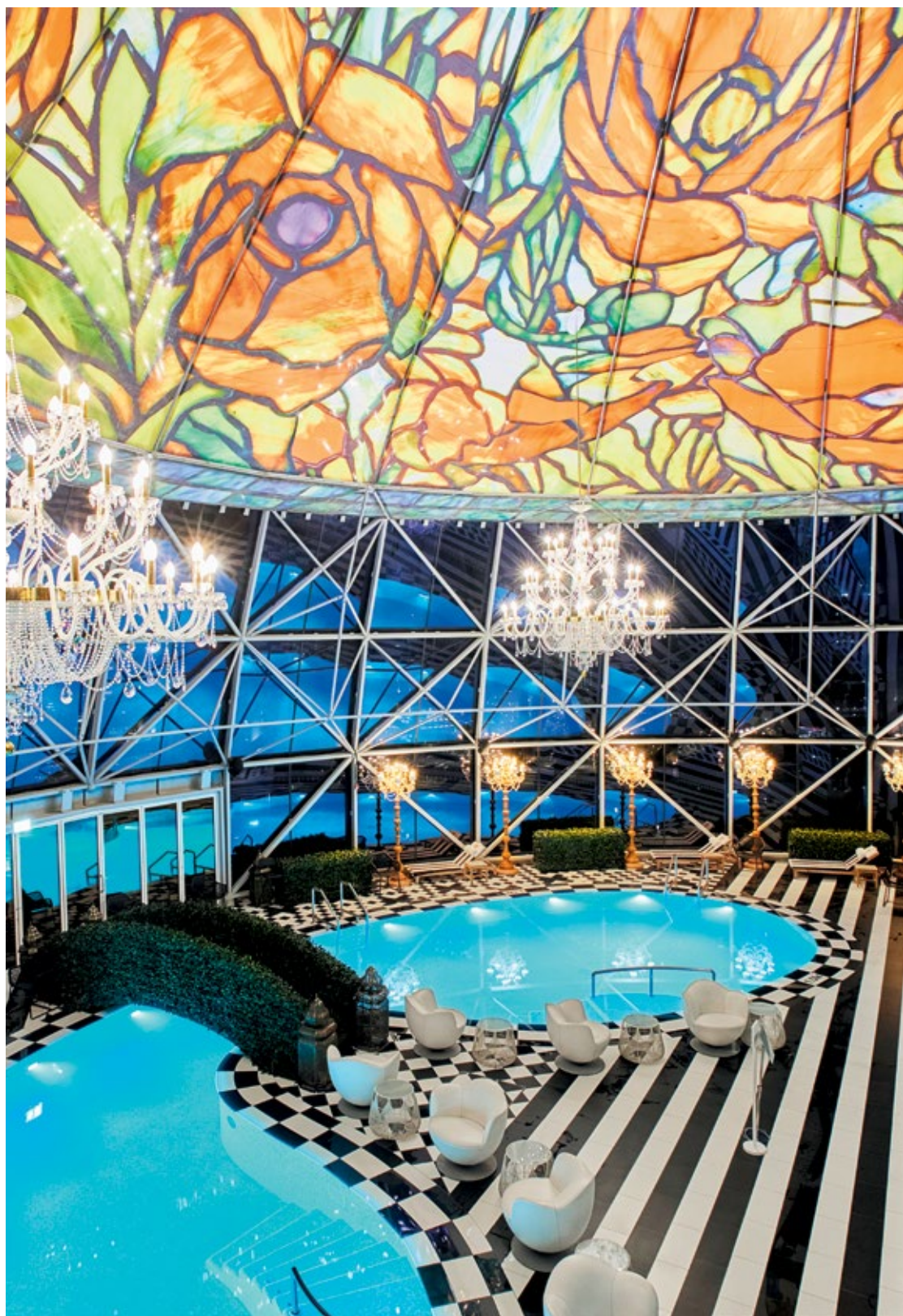
With its own private beach and botanical gardens, right in inner-city Doha, Sharq Village & Spa is designed after a traditional Qatari village and offers the hospitality to match. The spa offers a variety of massages and skin therapies, there are three pools outdoors and indoors, and there's a fully-serviced fitness centre on site. The 300 m private beach is a draw here, whether it's going for an early morning ocean swim or dining in your own private canopy right on the sand. There are a variety of rooms and suites, but for something truly special go for an over-water villa, built on a pier just metres above the ocean, and wake to the sound of the tide.

Ras Abu Abboud Street, Doha
+974 4425 6666
ritzcarlton.com/en/hotels/qatar/sharq-village

For more places to relax and unwind, scan below.



The pool at ESPA Spa, Mondrian Doha.



Independent health and beauty

Outside resorts and hotels, there are countless boutique businesses providing comparable luxury and care. Here are our picks.

Diva Lounge Spa

This small, award-winning chain of ladies' day spas offers a full-service boutique experience. Diva spas are designed for the professional woman to fit a bit of pampering into her day. Come for a pedicure and stay for a spell in the hammam.

Multiple locations
divaspaqatar.com

B/Attitude Spa Doha

This day spa offers not only 17 therapy rooms for men and women as well as hydrotherapy rooms, a sauna, a hammam and jacuzzis, but also a hair salon for women and barber for men. And the experience continues after you leave: they offer a holistic approach including personal training and lifestyle plans incorporating diet and exercise.

Beverly Hills Tower, 2nd Floor, West Bay
+974 4412 2046
battitudespadoha.com

Her Avenue Salon and Spa

Based in Al Waab, this boutique business offers full hair and body care, including threading, waxing and facial treatments.

Salwa Road
+974 4464 5582
heravenuesalon.com

Skin & Soul

With several branches throughout Doha, including one location for both men and women in the Lagoon Mall (right near The Pearl), Skin



Diva Lounge Spa.

& Soul offer day and evening make-up, nail and facial care and massage.

Lagoon Mall
+974 4411 2311
skinandsoul.com.qa

Yoga with a view

It seems a wasted opportunity to come to Qatar and practise yoga in your hotel room. Try these unforgettable experiences instead.

Full Moon Yoga

Once a month, there's a yoga class on the private beach of the Four Seasons Hotel in West Bay, under the shimmering light of the full moon. Soak up the moonlight and feel the flow.

Four Seasons, Doha, Al Corniche, West Bay
+974 4494 8802
evolvemindbodysoul.com

Helipad yoga

What better way to experience the panoramic views from the top of a Doha skyscraper than in the warrior pose? There are two spots to try for this extraordinary experience. Meet in the lobby of the JW Marriott Marquis and head up to the 50th floor helipad for a sunset experience to remember. Or try a morning or evening vinyasa class 46 floors up at the Rabban Suites Hotel. Plan ahead—both classes book out quickly.

JW Marriott Marquis, City Center, West Bay
+974 4407 6772

Niya Yoga

This popular local spot takes its name from the Arabic word for 'intention'. Niya Yoga offers classes at a range of levels and approaches, from the basics of yoga to meditation and mindfulness, and classes for the more experienced yogi. Your first class is free.

194 Mercato Plazzo 1, The Pearl
+974 4468 2562
niyayoga.qa

Vishnu Swasthi Yoga Studio

Run by Doha's own yoga influencer Vishnu Prasad, whose technique promises fast results for weight loss and fitness, Vishnu Swasthi offers multiple classes every day, including women's only classes. Located at the Sheraton Grand, Doha's original luxury hotel, there's also a spectacular view over the Corniche.

Sheraton Grand Doha, West Bay
+974 3320 2331
vishnuswasthiyoga.com



Rooftop yoga at sunset.

Family
and

Qatar is a very family-oriented place and virtually everywhere is kid-friendly. The kids we asked all said they love the market stalls of Souq Waqif (see page 186) and the exhibitions (particularly the interactive ones) of the National Museum of Qatar (see page 30).

But there's also an amazing array of activities aimed squarely at kids. You'll find surprisingly large indoor play centres and theme parks, with rides including gondolas, Ferris wheels, rollercoasters and indoor snow dunes (yes, snow). At Kidzania, children are in charge—they get to pick a role, don a uniform and help run a miniature city. And destinations like Angry Birds World, Doha Quest and Desert Falls Water & Adventure Park, the biggest waterpark in the Middle East, are unmissable for kids.

Outside, there are dozens of beautiful green parks, full of locals relaxing and enjoying the many sporting facilities of Al Bidda Park or just lounging in the sea breeze at MIA Park.

kids

Qatar's best parks

The city's family-friendly parklands are very popular spots for people to relax, exercise, or have fun. Feel the sea breeze at MIA Park, take a paddle boat out on the artificial lake or hit the Olympic swimming pools at Aspire Park, or get lost in the Qatar-shaped hedge maze at 5/6 Park, there's so much green space to enjoy.

5/6 Park

This pet-friendly park in West Bay has plenty of open green space and more. You'll find public art, playgrounds (both for kids and adults—check out the exercise equipment), a space dedicated to learning to ride a bicycle and a large hedge maze in the shape of Qatar itself.

Al Bayt Stadium Park

A short drive from Al Khor Park, this large space has plenty of greenery, exercise stations, a running track and boat hire on a man-made lake. It's all situated right by Al Bayt Stadium—in 2022, this 60,000 seat stadium will be where the FIFA World Cup™ kicks off.

Al Bidda Park

Right on the Corniche, Al Bidda Park is a popular spot for football, tennis, volleyball and basketball, with pitches and courts for hire, as well as bike rentals. With an amphitheatre, playgrounds and barbecue areas with plenty of shade, it's also just a nice place to relax. There are some impressive playgrounds on site, the highlights of which are a merry-go-round and a zip line. Keep an eye out for the huge natural rock formations preserved within the park, one with a restored watchtower atop.

Al Khor Park

One of the oldest parks in Qatar is in Al Khor, about 50 km north of Doha. Recently revamped, it's worth a day trip—not only is there plenty of

green space, a waterfall and a small train around the grounds, there's also a zoo, with oryx, emus, zebras and exotic birds. While you're in the area, the Al Thakira Mangroves, one of Qatar's most beautiful natural places, are a short drive away.

Aspire Park

Located within Doha's Aspire Zone, Qatar's sporting centre of excellence, is the city's biggest park. Take a paddle boat out on the artificial lake, or grab a coffee from one of the several cafes and walk or relax. The park is also right next to Villaggio Mall, a popular shopping spot with plenty more cafes and restaurants. It's also home to Hamad Aquatic Centre, the base of the Olympic swimming, water polo and diving teams (the Olympic pools are open to the public too), and Khalifa International Stadium, the country's home of football, which has recently been refurbished for the FIFA World Cup 2022.™

Katara Green Hills

Head to Katara and you can't miss the gloriously green hills which have some great city views from the top. With plenty of tree cover and with a bit of elevation, they're also very breezy. Everything Katara Cultural Village has to offer is right next door, including the beach, shopping and the spectacular amphitheatre. And on top of the north hill (with stunning views) is Bayt Al Talleh, one of the top dining spots in the area.



Park life: There's room for everyone at Doha's urban parks.





Whether it's a game of padel or just green open space you crave you'll find it at one of Qatar's many urban parks.

Lusail Crescent Park

In the middle of the new (and still under construction) metropolis of Lusail, immediately to the north of Doha is Crescent Park, a brand new park with basketball courts, beach volleyball and a very cool playground. Explore a full-sized dhow (the traditional fishing boats you can see in the Corniche) or take a slide from the top of a mosque-like tower. Don't miss the huge entrance archway, with a lookout at the top.

MIA Park

The park at the Museum of Islamic Art is an excellent vantage point for stunning views of the West Bay skyline. The crescent-shaped park is surrounded by water, so there's a gentle breeze straight off the ocean. There's a mini souq-style market, playground, sculptures (a highlight is '7' by American artist Richard Serra, a 24 m high steel sculpture inspired by a minaret) and paddle boats for hire. There are also regular concerts on the lawns and bazaars in the cooler months. A short walk away is the Box Park, built from colourful recycled shipping containers housing a handful of cafes and shops.

National Museum of Qatar Park

With several playgrounds, a cafe, public artworks and native Qatari plants and trees, this is a beautiful little spot by the spectacular National Museum of Qatar building.

Oxygen Park

In Education City, surrounded by some of Doha's most striking architecture, you'll find this cool, shady park fitted out with football pitches, beach volleyball, a running track and an equestrian track weaving throughout. Popular with students (there are several university campuses nearby), it's a great spot to exercise, play, or just relax in the shaded areas and admire the birdlife and the passing horses.

Sheraton Hotel Park

Right by the oldest five-star hotel in Doha, this park has an up-close view of West Bay's skyscrapers in one direction and the calm waters of the Arabian Gulf in the other. Grab a coffee, take a walk along the waterfront and enjoy the view.

Theme parks and play areas for kids

Kids will never be bored in Qatar. There are so many theme parks and play areas just for kids that we couldn't possibly list them all. But here are our picks of the bunch.

360 MiniGolf

A compact pirate ship-themed mini-golf course built around a multi-level playground, right in the middle of the City Center mall.

Doha City Center 4th Street
+974 7064 4011

Circus Land

Roll up! From the old-fashioned carousel to the trampolines, this mini theme park at Landmark Mall delivers circus-themed fun. Check out the well-equipped gaming arcade and the airplane flyover ride. There's also a children's salon on site.

Landmark Mall
+974 4487 6111
landmarkdoha.com/landmark-brands/circusland

Funderdome

With lots of physical activities for kids to explore, including slides, trikes, ball pits and trampolines, there's plenty here for little ones to expend a bit of energy.

Mirqab Mall, Al Mirqab Al Jadeed Street
+974 4443 9740
funderdomedoha.com

Gondolania

A full-scale theme park squeezed into Villaggio Mall, Gondolania offers a Ferris wheel, bumper cars, a 12 lane bowling alley, go-karts and many more rides. While you're at Villaggio, don't miss the gondola rides along the indoor canal. Oh, and the Olympic-sized ice-skating rink.

Villaggio Mall
+974 4403 9800
gondolania.com

Kidzania

The mini-city of Kidzania is a self-sufficient little economy, with its own currency and public services. Ever wanted to be a doctor, or a barber, or a pilot? Choose a job and uniform, and join in!

Aspire Zone
+974 4482 6222
doha.kidzania.com

Kidzmondo

Kidzmondo is built around the same concept as Kidzania (though it's slightly smaller)—kids pick a job and work together in a miniature city, learning that we all have a role to play.

Mall of Qatar
+974 4028 5888
kidzmondodoha.com



A rollercoaster winds under a bridge at Gondolania, Villaggio Mall.

The best fun for families

Many of these are for bigger kids and young-at-heart adults, including virtual reality games, trampolining and the biggest waterpark in the Middle East.

Angry Birds World

Based on the addictive mobile app, this theme park has over 20 elaborate rides with all the colour and quirkiness of the game. You'll even find a go-karting track inside.

Doha Festival City, Umm Salal Muhammed
+974 4042 0444
angrybirdsworld.qa

BOUNCE

Trampolining isn't just for kids. While the little ones will have fun, the adults will find it's actually quite a work-out. At BOUNCE, one of the largest trampoline centres in the region, you can freestyle it, learn some impressive acrobatics, or try out the X-Park adventure obstacle course.

Al Duhail South in Tawar Mall,
Al Markhiya Street, Doha
+974 4408 6500
bounce.qa

Desert Falls Water & Adventure Park

One of the biggest theme parks in the Middle East, Desert Falls Water & Adventure Park has over 50 rides including 25 waterslides, a wave pool and water playgrounds. For a closer look turn to page 76.

Salwa Beach Resort, Salwa
+974 4423 6416
salwabeachresort.qa

Doha Quest

This large and impressive amusement centre has three zones, themed around the past,

present and future, all sleekly designed and immersive. Come for the rollercoaster, the VR rides, the world's tallest indoor drop tower, and plenty of young kid-friendly rides and experiences.

Doha Oasis Shopping Centre, Al Khaleej Street
+974 4410 3444
dohaquest.com

Hangout

This gaming arcade offers driving and flight simulators, an escape room and a variety of VR games, many of which go beyond the usual fare.

Mirqab Mall (1st floor)
+974 4476 1127
hangoutqatar.com

Jump

Similar to BOUNCE, Jump has more trampolines and more obstacle courses—but this one is a little more kid-focused.

Mirqab Mall, Mezzanine floor
+974 4447 9313
jumpqatar.com

Megapolis

This indoor entertainment centre in The Pearl offers bowling, arcade games, virtual reality, billiards, escape rooms and even karaoke.

Medina Centrale, The Pearl
+974 4437 8444
megapolisqatar.com



Snow Dunes

Qatar has more snow than you'd think. At Snow Dunes, 17 snow guns and a temperature of -4°C maintain a winter wonderland of slides, snow dunes and rides.

Doha Festival City, Umm Salal Muhammed
+974 4042 0444
snowdunes.qa

Virtuocity

Taking video games to the next level, Virtuocity runs high-level gaming tournaments in its elaborate Coliseum arena. There are also VR experiences and escape rooms on site.

Doha Festival City Umm Salal Muhammed
+974 4042 0444
virtuocity.qa

Zero Latency

A global virtual reality phenomenon. It offers immersive sci-fi games for bigger kids and adults—put on a headset and evade zombies, investigate an abandoned space station overrun with angry robots, or combat player versus player.

Tawar Mall (inside BOUNCE), Al Markhiya Street,
Al Duhail South
+974 3021 9588
zerolatemyme.com

Scan below for
more family-friendly
fun in Qatar.



Top: Fun times at Snow Dunes.
Bottom: Testing reflexes at one
of Doha's many arcades.



Educational fun

These places go beyond mere entertainment...
but they're still fun!



Above and right: The Al Thuraya Planetarium offers fun for all age groups and educational levels.

Al Thuraya Planetarium

Taking you on a journey around the galaxy in an immersive auditorium with a 22 m screen, the Al Tharaya Planetarium explores science and even myth. One popular exhibit discusses the science behind the 'split of the moon', a miracle in the Islamic faith.

Katara Cultural Village
+974 4408 2067
katara.net

Baladna Park

This family-favourite fun park in the north of Qatar is based in a real working farm, so there are plenty of opportunities to meet the animals and learn about agriculture. Elsewhere, there are a lot of adventures to be had, including go-karts, a bungee trampoline and a zip line.

Al Khor
+974 4424 6000
baladnapark.com

Children's Library

At the back of the renowned Qatar National Library, there's another library dedicated to kids. As well as the extensive collection of books (there are over a hundred thousand), the Children's Library contains educational toys and games, and hosts a full schedule of workshops and activities including story time, literacy lessons and theatre programmes.

Education City
+974 4454 0100
qnl.qa

CurioCITY Center of Play

Drawing inspiration from day-to-day life in Qatar, CurioCITY is a little city all on its own. Kids are encouraged to use their imagination build and explore different areas themed around 'big people' Doha, from a little Corniche to a



theatre holding puppet shows, and a science and technology park.

La Croisette 18, Porto Arabia, The Pearl
+974 7723 3233
centerofplay.com

Museum of Illusions

The Museum of Illusions is a surreal education experience built on exhibits and interactive rooms that play tricks on the mind and the senses. Learn how perspective tricks can shrink someone or turn you into a giant, and can defy gravity itself.

The Gate Mall, Omar Al Mukhtar Street
+974 4020 6273
museumofillusions.qa

Coming soon: Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar. Dadu is Arabic not only for 'play', but also for 'mark-making'. Doha's highly-anticipated new Children's Museum will be all about stimulating, tactile and imaginative exhibits, activities and events for children of all ages and abilities, encouraging kids to learn hands-on.

Fashion and

S

Wandering the streets of Doha, you'll discover that Qataris have their own inimitable sense of style. Whether it's men in long, pressed white thobes and gutras, or the contemporary approach that women bring to their traditional abayas, Qataris know how to dress.

The country is the fashion and shopping destination of the region, with high-end shopping, dozens of palatial malls and, of course, bustling souqs (markets) ideal for tasting local street food and picking up some bargains.

The city's shopping districts are the place to be at night, when locals come to meet and relax.

You'll find brands and designers from all over the world here, but Qatar also has a design scene of its own. Turn to page 178 for a rundown of the local fashion labels to look out for, or page 168 for our look at the new Doha Design District, in Msheireb Downtown Doha.

hopping

Design for the future

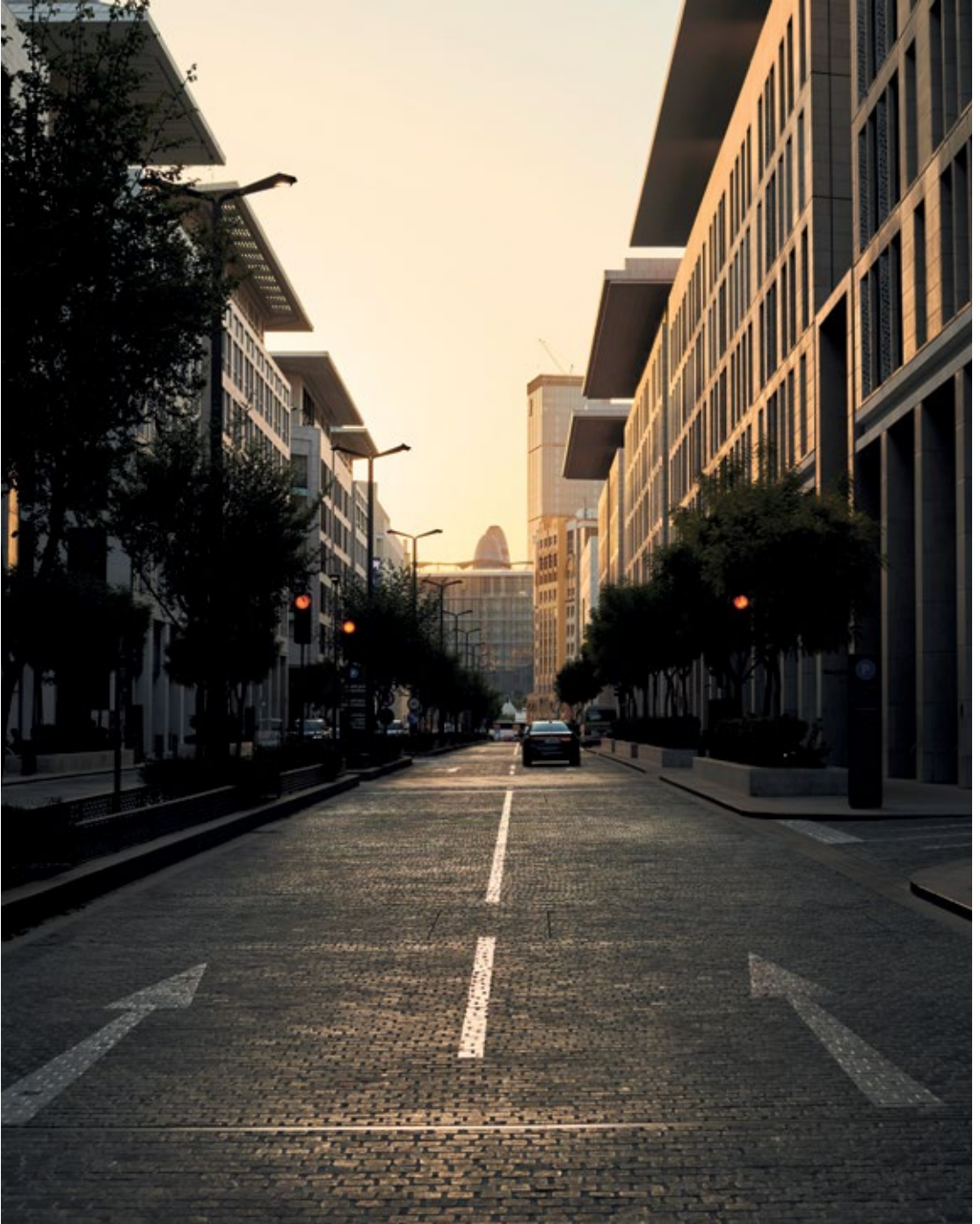
Msheireb Downtown Doha is a renaissance town. Conceived as a complete rethink of the city's old downtown area, it's been designed as the world's first sustainable downtown regeneration project. From early plans to construction, it's the holistic design that makes Msheireb special.

With trams winding through breezy streets, and cafes, restaurants and boutiques spilling out onto wide footpaths, it feels unlike anything else in Qatar.

"Msheireb inspires everyone who visits, from international designers to young students," says Shaikha Al Sulaiti, Interior Design Manager at Msheireb Properties. Shaikha Al Sulaiti has been working on the Msheireb project since 2009. "I've seen the whole thing develop," she says. "But every time I walk down the street there's always a new detail I can appreciate and admire. I stop and think, wow, they really did think of everything."

The spectacle of Downtown Msheireb Doha at sunset as the golden light dances across the stunning architecture.

Qatar's new design district is where you can explore the work of local makers and international icons—and it's kickstarting a design revolution in the region.





Top: Window displays highlighting emerging designers in Msheireb. Left and below: Displays at Msheireb shops.



Now, Shaikha Al Sulaiti is involved in the next step in Msheireb's evolution.

Around the streets, between public artworks from street art to sculpture, you'll see the first hints at a major new project. Msheireb has been chosen as the home of the Doha Design District, a wide-ranging project which aims to kickstart a new culture of design and creativity in Qatar. It aims to make Msheireb the go-to location for design in the Gulf region.

If you want to see the latest in Italian furniture design, French couture and the new innovations that Qatar wants to bring to the design world, Msheireb is the place to be.

"Design is more than just an aesthetic expression," Shaikha Al Sulaiti said during the virtual launch of Doha Design District in February. "It's an emotional response to the environment you're in. It's about understanding people—how they live, work and play."

Soon, Msheireb Downtown Doha will host design at all levels. Shaikha Al Sulaiti highlights the Italian furniture brands soon to open stores in Msheireb, including Minotti, Poliform B&B Italia and Henge.

But perhaps generating even more excitement, the exhibition '*Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams*' offers over seven decades of iconic French couture from one of the most famous fashion houses in the world on display in Doha, from early 1940s pieces to the Lady Dior bag made famous 24 years ago by Princess Diana.

There is also an upcoming exhibition of key works from Italian fashion house Valentino. This show is a huge draw for Doha, but Shaikha Al Sulaiti also hopes it will also inspire local makers.

But that's just the beginning. Alongside exhibitions like '*Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams*', there will be pop-ups, activations and displays highlighting local designers.

The Dior exhibition is being hosted at M7, a brand-new design hub that will act as an incubator for up-and-coming designers. M7 is about kickstarting a culture of design in Qatar. Upstairs from the Dior exhibition, M7 hosts co-working spaces, a materials library and valuable infrastructure, like 3D printing facilities.

"We want everything to be within reach for designers, for them to collaborate, to feed off one another," says M7's Director, Maha Ghanim Al Sulaiti. "This is their time."

M7 aims to nurture local designers to be able to compete with international creatives. "In Qatar we look to big companies to design and create, but there are a lot of local startups that can do that," says Maha Ghanim Al Sulaiti. "We're trying to shed light on these talents."

This means spotlighting graduates from Qatar's renowned Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts (more commonly known as VCUarts), but also means supporting anyone who has passion and talent.



The M7 building, Msheireb.



“We’re also looking at the hobbyists, from people with talent who want to explore, right up to the more established designers who want to scale up,” says Maha Ghanim Al Sulaiti. “Our role is to connect the dots, to find what exists already.”

Maha Ghanim Al Sulaiti cites one of M7’s partners, The Cutting Studio, as a prime example of the talent that already exists in Doha. Designer Ghada Al Subaey runs her own renowned fashion label, 1309, and launched The Cutting Studio to use resources and knowledge to help other designers.

“She made this comfortable place for women to go and work,” says Maha Ghanim Al Sulaiti. “Younger designers who don’t really have the background but want to create something could go there and experiment and create. She’s a great success story.”

Now, Al Subaey will be given the space to scale up The Cutting Studio at M7, with a bigger space and more opportunities to coach young designers.

“We’re looking at all levels,” says Maha Ghanim Al Sulaiti. “The workshops can be for someone with zero experience, who just wants to do something fun, or to learn a trade. We want people to join the community.”

M7 is open now. ‘Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams’ opened at M7 in November and runs until March 2022.

About M7

How do I get there?

The M7 Hub is in the heart of Msheireb Downtown Doha, close to Msheireb metro station, and accessible via the Msheireb tram.

When is it open?

Saturday to Thursday: 9am – 7pm

Friday: 1:30pm – 7pm

How much does it cost?

Entry is free to the M7 Hub, admission to ‘Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams’ costs QAR 100.

What else is there to do while I’m in Msheireb?

Msheireb Downtown Doha is one of the most vibrant spots in the city, full of great cafes (Go Home, EL&N London, The Hangout, Ministry of Coffee, %Arabica) and restaurants (Liang, Izu, Nourlaya, Sofra). Check out the Msheireb Downtown Doha app (available on Android and Apple devices) for more information on highlights, parking, accessibility and more.

The height of luxury: Qatar's high-end shopping

Qataris know luxury. Across Doha you'll find multiple destinations for the finer things in life. These aren't just shopping centres, but bespoke experiences to fit the tastes of the clientele.

21 High st and Galeries Lafayette

You don't have to go to Paris to experience this beacon of French luxury. High-end shopping destination 21 High st, based in Katara Cultural Village, has a branch of Galeries Lafayette of its own, in bespoke Haussmann-inspired architecture. You'll find hundreds of brands over three floors, including Chanel, Tom Ford, Hermès, Givenchy, Dior and Van Cleef & Arpels. Across the amazingly climate-controlled outdoor plaza, you'll find European brands like Cartier, 100% Capri and Joseph. Katara Cultural Village is a popular spot for events and pop-ups, and the beach is just moments away. Come at night when the area's buildings are dramatically lit.

Katara Cultural Village
+974 4402 6156
21highst.net

Al Hazm

The discerning Qatari shopper heads to Al Hazm, a grand destination in the city's west. Al Hazm translates to "higher ground" and the mall delivers just that. Entering Al Hazm is like stepping into a different world. The large central piazza is shaded with 800-year-old olive trees imported from Italy and Spain. Cafes and restaurants spill out onto the piazza.

The buildings are constructed from imported Tuscan marble. And then there's the shopping. Expect a curated selection of the finest Middle Eastern boutiques, including fashion, perfumes and accessories. There's also a vast, grand library, stocked with leatherbound books on oak shelves.

Al Markhiya
+974 4411 1444
alhazm.com

The Pearl

On this man-made island reaching out into the Arabian Gulf you'll find boundless luxury and indulgence. As well as busy indoor malls like Medina Centrale, you'll find high-end fashion, lifestyle and jewellery boutiques sitting between some of the city's best cafes and restaurants. There are also a number of luxury car dealerships dotted around the island, including Rolls Royce, Ferrari, Porsche, Bentley and Maserati. A must-see is Qanat Quartier, the island's Venetian-inspired district, where canals wind between pastel-coloured apartment buildings. And yes, some homes are for sale.

The Pearl
+974 4411 1444
thepearlqatar.com



Doha's malls are known for their luxury shopping.



Villaggio

With faux-Venetian façades, a trompe l'œil ceiling and an indoor canal complete with gondolas to transport people up and down the long halls of shops, Villaggio has a huge range of stores, from high-end to fast fashion, and dozens of restaurants and cafes. But for the luxury shopper, head for the mall's Via Domo district for stores from Dolce & Gabbana, Tiffany & Co., Ralph Lauren, Valentino, Cartier and countless others. Several luxury brands including Versace, Fendi, Gucci and Dior also have children's stores, for the child with exclusive taste.

Aspire Zone
+974 4422 7400
villaggioqatar.com

Blue Salon

One of Qatar's first (and still foremost) purveyors of luxury, this department store specialises in fashion and jewellery for men and women, with a range of local and international brands.

Al Sadd
+974 4446 6111
bluesalon.com

Salam

Established in Qatar in 1952, Salam department stores have gone on to become an icon of luxury in the country. You can find stores at the Mall of Qatar and The Gate Mall (West Bay).

Various locations
+974 4448 5617
salams.com



Far left: Off-the-rack at Emilio Pucci. Left: Shopping at Louis Vuitton.
Below and bottom: Middle-Eastern style and Dolce & Gabbana.



Qatar's high-fashion designers



Qatar's couture and luxury ready-to-wear designers are standing out in the region. Here are three to look out for.

Tiiya

Established in 2010 by mother/daughter duo Shaikha Alanoud Alattiya and Shaikha Shaikha Al-Thani, Tiiya's pieces take their cues from different societies and cultures, and from nature, turning tradition and family history into elegance. Shaikha Alanoud Alattiya is a pioneer of Qatari fashion—her previous label, Noblesse Oblige, was the country's first fashion brand to export to the world.

The Kayys

The Kayys came to international attention when worn on-stage by Gwen Stefani in 2015. Sisters Hend, Ghada and Maha Al Subaey started the label in 2011 out of a desire to see their lifestyles represented—referencing traditional Middle Eastern women's attire, but with an utterly contemporary execution.

Harlienz

The first Qatari brand to feature at New York Fashion Week, Harlienz pieces are renowned as easy-to-wear and versatile, taking inspiration from long, flowing traditional Middle Eastern garments like jalabiyas and abayas.

Harlienz take a luxury approach to traditional garments.

The biggest and best malls

The city's malls are hugely popular destinations for Qataris. Visit on a Thursday or Friday night (Qatar's weekend), and these malls are packed with families and young people shopping, eating and socialising. Here are the biggest and best—from shopping to dining to entertainment, you won't need to leave.

Mall of Qatar

One of the biggest malls in the country at 500,000 m², the Mall of Qatar delivers an all-round shopping experience, with popular retailers from around the world, from Abercrombie & Fitch to Zara. There are several department stores, luxury and high-end stores, entertainment including a huge amusement park featuring an indoor rollercoaster, and a 19 screen cinema. It's about 20 km out of Doha, but easily accessible by the quick and frequent metro system.

Dukhan Highway
+974 4034 6063
mallofqatar.com.qa

Doha Festival City

In Doha's north, this mega-mall may be the biggest in the country (both Festival City and Mall of Qatar claim that honour, but we're staying out of it). It has a similar level of shopping to Mall of Qatar, with a few exclusives like IKEA and Harvey Nichols (a luxury department store with brands including Ganni, Jacquemus, Max Mara, and Saint Laurent), a huge food court including international gems you won't find elsewhere, like Jamie's Italian, and one of the country's biggest cinemas, with 18 screens. You'll also find the world's first Angry Birds World here, a theme park bringing the popular mobile game to life.

Al Ebb
+974 4035 4444
dohafestivalcity.com

Lagoona Mall

Right by The Pearl, Lagoona has over 180 stores, with a strong mix of high street and high-end, including Fifty One East, a department store with a music store and school within.

West Bay Lagoon
+974 4433 5555
lagoonamall.com

For more shopping inspiration, scan the QR code below.



Duty free at Hamad International Airport

Your shopping doesn't end when you check out of the hotel. Hamad International Airport is like a shopping mall in itself, with a branch of Harrods, plenty of other luxury stores and some extremely well-priced duty-free options. Turn to page 212 for more on everything Hamad International Airport has to offer.



Shopping in style at Hamad International Airport.

Gift ideas

Want to get some Qatari gifts for a loved one back home? We suggest:



A handmade sufra, used as a tray, platter or cover.



Take a little bit of Qatar home for your family.

Perfume

You'll find perfume everywhere in Qatar. We recommend oud, a local woody fragrance (try the oud from Ajmal Perfumes), and products from The Perfume Factory, that make great perfumed hand sanitisers, and from S'Ishira.

Sweets

Qataris have a sweet tooth. Dates are a staple here (seek out branches of Qinwan Dates for the gold standard www.qinwandates.com). Kaafe specialises in elevated chocolates in beautiful gift boxes (kaafeqa.com). Also be sure to search Souq Waqif for baklava, kunafa and halva, and try lugimat, a traditional Qatari sweet available in many bakeries.

A desert rose

These beautiful mineral formations found in the desert make a great ornamental present. You can find them at the National Museum of Qatar gift shop, or at some stalls in Souq Waqif.

A dallah

This traditional Arabic coffee pot has a beautiful decorative quality and could also be a gateway into brewing gahwa or Khaleeji Arabic coffee.

Arts and crafts

Paintings, tapestries, pottery and embroidery are very popular in the souqs and at Katara Art Centre.

Souvenirs

You'll find any number of souvenirs and trinkets in the stalls of Souq Waqif, and you should also check out the gift shops at the National Museum of Qatar (inq-online.com) and the Museum of Islamic Art.

Incense and candles

One of our favourite Qatari makers is Botany, that make completely organic, vegan candles (bo-ta-ny.shop). And bukkhoor, a traditional Arabic incense (essentially a scented chip of wood that releases its aroma when burned) can be found anywhere, but we like the kind from Ahmed Perfume (ahmed-perfume.com/qa/product-category/dakhoon/bakhoor).

Lusail: the future of shopping



Place Vendôme, your next favourite shopping destination in Qatar.

Immediately north of The Pearl, a whole new city is under construction. Lusail is a new metropolis designed to support Qatar's growing population. It's a huge undertaking. According to developers Qatari Diar, the city will house an estimated 450,000 people. It will also be home to some of the city's finest shopping destinations.

Place Vendôme

Place Vendôme will be the biggest shopping centre in Qatar. Named after the home of luxury in Paris, it promises to deliver on that front. Behind the Parisian façade, there will be over a million square metres of shops, as well as cafes, restaurants and entertainment, three hotels and an amusement park. Opening 2022.

Lusail Boulevard

Touted as the 'Champs Élysées of the Middle East', this climate-controlled boulevard will be home to many shops and boutiques. The boulevard is right near Lusail Stadium, the largest of Qatar's FIFA World Cup 2022™ venues, and will be a key part of the designated fan zone during the Cup.

Qatar's traditional markets

Before the malls, Qatar's souqs (markets) were the hubs of the city's trade. And they still are. In these winding alleyways and halls, you'll find textiles and crafts, perfumes, jewellery and every spice imaginable. All your gift and souvenir needs can be taken care of here, but don't forget to treat yourself as well—try some local delicacies, like dates and some of the best hummus of your life.

Souq Waqif

Souq Waqif is a cornerstone of Qatar's maritime trading history. The name translates as "standing market" and there's been a souq on this site for centuries—it was a place where the world came to trade with Qataris. Today, it's still a big draw for visitors. This isn't the original souq. After the structures on this site fell into disrepair and were eventually destroyed by fire, the souq was carefully reconstructed using traditional techniques. Haggling is encouraged. For something a little more down-to-earth, head to the adjacent Souq Asiri and Souq Faleh, where locals shop—they're somewhere in between the traditional souq and the mega-malls of today.

Doha

Gold Souq

For those after something special, head right across the street (or via the metro underpass) from Souq Waqif. Gold is cheap and untaxed in Qatar. The many jewellers at the Gold Souq offer quality gold jewellery at excellent prices (values fluctuate slightly according to the global gold price—watch as they weigh your purchase in front of you to set the price).

Near Souq Waqif, Al Ahmed Street, Doha

Omani Souq

A little off the beaten track in Al Sailiya (about 25 km inland) is this compact, cheap market to buy dates, spices, perfume and other Qatari staples. It's away from the usual tourist spots and less flashy, so you're sure to get a bargain.

Near Wholesale Market, Al Sailiya, Doha

Souq Al Wakra

Thirty minutes south of Doha, the waterfront souq at Al Wakrah recalls the city's seaside village roots. You'll find everything here you can find at Souq Waqif, but a little more compact, and with the added bonus of its own pristine beach, lined with palm trees, umbrellas and old dhows. The Souq is divided into different areas by type of product, from honey to dates to perfume, and there are plenty of little cafes and restaurants, particularly along the waterfront. Worth the trip.

Al Wakrah



Shopping in Doha's traditional market Souq Waqif (top left and right, bottom right) and the Gold Souq (bottom left).

Wildlife

Drive for less than an hour in any direction from your Doha hotel and you'll discover extraordinary sights. There are shifting sand dunes (and the creatures that thrive in them), pristine beaches, a hidden cave full of birdsong and the Inland Sea.

Animals play a huge part in Qatari life. The noble, powerful falcon is the national bird and you'll find them everywhere, in the wild or in the Falcon Souq in the heart of Doha.

The biggest adventures are to be found in the desert. The beauty of the wide-open landscape is what hits first, but look closer and you'll see a land rich in variety, home to a wide range of wildlife, like the horned Arabian oryx and the lesser jerboa, a kind of mouse that hops on long, kangaroo-like legs.

On the shoreline, you'll see pink flamingos, rare nesting turtles, and beyond that, one of the world's largest concentrations of whale sharks.

and
nature

The 11 most fascinating animals in Qatar

From the inspiration for the unicorn, to graceful hunting birds who get their own seats on the plane, to a cute—and surprisingly resilient—breed of desert cat, Qatar's diverse wildlife is full of surprises.

Arabian oryx

(*Oryx leucoryx*)

These medium-sized antelope-like creatures are renowned for their grace and beauty, and particularly for their ringed, two-foot long horns. As the country's national animal, they're extremely important to Qataris. And they're believed to be the inspiration for the unicorn. In their natural habitat, the oryx will rest in shaded areas by day, and by night they will feed on grass and vegetation, and travel, moving up to 50 km before dawn. Though the oryx isn't considered endangered, it's on the 'vulnerable' list. Your best chance of seeing them is at government reserves, such as Al Shahaniya (about half an hour west of Doha) or Al Maha (near Zekreet), where they live in an approximation of their natural environment, with plenty of room to roam.

Whale shark

(*Rhincodon typus*)

The largest living fish in the sea, whale sharks grow up to 18 m long and can live for over a hundred years. These slow-moving creatures

feed entirely on plankton and fish eggs, and are completely harmless to humans—in fact, they've been known to be quite playful with divers.

Though they're endangered, there's no better place in the world to see them than Qatar. In the warmer months (April to September) they gather in their hundreds off the country's north-east coast. Discover Qatar is currently working on a way for people to get up close to the whale sharks without disturbing their habitat. Watch this space.

Greater flamingo

(*Phoenicopterus roseus*)

Growing as tall at 1.8 m, long-legged and bright pink, greater flamingos are often seen on mudflats and in shallow lagoons, where they use their feet to stir up mud and their beaks to weed out algae and seafood. Flamingos aren't native to Qatar. But in the winter months, hundreds of them flock to Qatar's shores, particularly at their favourite spot, the Al Thakira Mangroves in the country's north, where they feed on fish and crustaceans. (Turn to page 94 for more reasons to visit the Al Thakira Mangroves.)



Top: The Arabian oryx is the national animal of Qatar. Bottom: You'll see flamingos on the shores of Qatar in the winter months.



The whale shark (top) and the hawksbill sea turtle are two highly endangered animals you may be lucky enough to see in Qatar.

Sand cat

(*Felis margarita thinobia*)

Living in the harshest desert conditions, sand cats have adapted to survive on little to no water—the moisture in their food, which includes rodents, birds and lizards, provides all the water they need for months on end. They never grow very big—coupled with their large paws (which help them move across soft sand) and oversized ears (which give them extraordinary hearing), this gives them a life-long kittenish look. Today, sand cats are endangered due to overhunting and destruction of their natural habitats. It's rare to see them in the wild, though there are occasional sightings. You can visit them at wildlife sanctuaries, such as the Al Kubaisi Educational Reserve in Al Ruwais.

Falcon

(*Falco cherrug*, *Falco peregrinus*, et al)

These striking, noble birds of prey hold a special status in Qatar. As the country's national bird, they're everywhere from logos to markets to the 500 riyal note. A falcon is a revered gift, often passed from father to son, and trainers form intense bonds with their animals. The tradition of falconry as a sport dates back 5,000 years and is still going strong, with regular competitions drawing big audiences and TV coverage. Many hours go into training each bird. The most common breeds trained for hunting are the peregrine falcon and the saker falcon, though there are several others. The peregrine is the fastest animal in the world, with a flight speed of up to 389 km per hour. On a Qatar Airways flight, you may even find yourself sitting next to one—owners are reluctant to let their birds out of their sight, so they have special dispensation to fly economy or business class. Your best bet at getting close to one is the Falcon Souq, adjacent to Souq Waqif in Doha.

Honey badger

(*Mellivora capensis*)

Large, solitary and known to be extremely aggressive, honey badgers tend to live alone in self-dug holes, emerging at night to feed on anything they can get their paws on, including birds' eggs, snakes, berries

and insects. As their name suggests, they have a special affinity for honey and they are known to raid beehives, emitting a suffocating scent into the hive to repel bees and steal honey. They evade attackers by burrowing. But under pressure, they're particularly fearless, taking on any creature from a hyena to a lion. But don't worry, they only attack when provoked. When they see a human, their instinct is to hide.

Hawksbill sea turtle

(*Eretmochelys imbricata*)

These beautiful, solitary creatures live primarily in shallow ocean. Every two years, the female hawksbill crawls onto scattered beaches across the world and lays her eggs. About two months later, the hatchlings emerge into the moonlight and head back to the ocean. The International Union for Conservation of Nature has classified the hawksbill sea turtle as 'critically endangered', so this nesting process, which occurs at Fuwairit and other surrounding beaches, is of global significance. The beach is closed to swimmers for several months around hatching season to give the hawksbills the peace and safety they need, often starting around April. However, visitors are sometimes allowed to observe the turtles from a safe distance at night. In 2020, Qatar Museums ran tours.

Dromedary

(*Camelus dromedarius*)

Similar to instantly-recognisable bactrian camels, though with only one hump, the dromedary is also slightly taller, has shorter hair and can travel in the desert for up to three months without water. They've been employed as beasts of burden on the Arabian Peninsula for thousands of years. You'll see them on farms in the desert, or on the racetrack. Camel racing is big business in Qatar. In 2004, the country banned using human jockeys in favour of robots (yes, robots) and you can see them in action at the Al Shahaniya Camel Racing Track about 30 minutes west of Doha. Watch as dozens of dromedaries sprint out of the gate and gain speeds of up to 40 km per hour, while owners and trainers drive alongside them in SUVs.

Cape hare

(*Lepus capensis*)

These small hares (around 30 cm long, but with disproportionately large ears) feed on shrubbery and grass, and are able to subsist on salt water. Generally active at night, quick and extremely well camouflaged, cape hares are very hard to spot. But they're widespread across the desert. Keep an eye out for them zigzagging across the sand dunes after dark.

Lesser jerboa

(*Jaculus jaculus*)

These unusual looking rodents have the upper body of a mouse and the legs of a kangaroo, which they use to hop at great speeds in the desert. They grow up to 30 cm long, including their long tails, which have a tuft of fur at the end, used as a counterbalance. With size, superior hearing and cunning on their side, they easily avoid predators, burrowing up to 2 m into the sand and covering the burrow entrance with vegetation. They emerge to feed only at night, on grass, seeds and fungi. They are widespread in the Qatari desert, but shy—you're unlikely to spot one in the wild.

Dugong

(*Dugong dugon*)

These large, seagrass-grazing aquatic mammals, also known as sea cows, have been occupying the waters surrounding Qatar for over seven thousand years. They grow up to 3 m long and consume up to 40 kg of seagrass every day. Partially blind, they get around with the help of their acute hearing and frequently come to the surface for oxygen. Qatar has the second largest dugong population in the world, after Australia. The nation's Ministry of Municipality and Environment is committed to protecting dugongs, and in 2021 Qatar's dugong population was declared to be at a 30-year high, with 840 in Qatari waters. They can be spotted at Simaisma, on the country's east coast, and Umm Bab and Dukhan, on the west coast.

This article was written with the assistance of Mohammed Al Kubaisi, owner of the Al Kubaisi Educational Reserve in Al Ruwais. Mr. Al Kubaisi has a summer and winter programme—check @alkubaisi.educational.reserve on Instagram for booking details.

For more fascinating wildlife, scan the QR code below.





Left: The cape hare is active at night and very difficult to spot. Above: Qatar has a long-standing love affair with the falcon. You may even sit next to one on a plane! Right: A sand cat can survive on little to no water.



Qatar's must-see natural wonders

Beyond the city, Qatar's desert landscape has a lot to offer. The best way of seeing everything is hiring a car, programming your GPS and getting out there. Petrol is cheap, and at only 160 km from top to bottom, you can get anywhere in Qatar in a few hours. Otherwise, there are plenty of tour companies offering day trips and overnight desert safaris.



Above: The breathtaking sand dunes on Qatar's south-east coast.
Right: Limestone cliff formations near Zekreet on the west coast.



Zekreet

Named after the Arabic word “zikra”, meaning “memories”, Zekreet is a region in the country's west known for its natural desert beauty. Limestone cliffs jut out from the pebbly earth, twisting into odd mushroom-shaped formations. Traces of long-abandoned villages blend right into the landscape. But perhaps the most dramatic feature is more recent—American artist Richard Serra's sculpture *East-West/West-East*, a series of four enormous, oxidised steel plinths, which tower over the desert. At the coast, the desert sands give way to a beautiful beach, a popular family spot.

Musfir Sinkhole

About 40 km west of Doha, slightly off-road, an insignificant-looking hole in the ground is the entrance to an extraordinary Pleistocene Era sinkhole. Climbing down some hundred metres or so, you'll see the sunlight hit increasingly ancient layers of millennia old sediment and hear the tweeting of the birds that call this cool spot home. Rock climbers will want to come for a bit of bouldering, but it's also just a peaceful, wondrous place to visit, not to mention a great photo opportunity. Though it's an easy enough climb down to the bottom, be aware that there are no safety features, no fences, steps or guide-ropes. Be careful of loose stones.

Khor Al Udaid

Drive until the buildings disappear behind you, to the end of the road. Now keep driving. Khor Al Udaid, at the southern-most point of Qatar's coast, is known for its endless sand dunes giving way to the clear blue bay known as the Inland Sea. There are no firm landmarks here—the dunes shift and move constantly, growing up to 40 m high. By night, the Inland Sea recedes completely. It's only 90 minutes south of the city, but it feels like another world. Popular with four-wheel drivers, quad bikers and sandboarders, the dunes are an essential part of your desert itinerary. In the cooler months, many Qataris camp here for extended periods—a tradition stretching back centuries.

Al Thakira Mangroves

In Qatar's north-east, near the historic town of Al Khor, there's an unexpected geographical feature. The large expanse of lush natural greenery of the Al Thakira Mangroves comes out of nowhere as you approach from the desert. They're home to plenty of wildlife, from small fish and crabs to the flamingos who migrate here to feed on them. The best way to experience the mangroves is to bring a kayak. It's an experience wholly different to anything else the country has to offer.

Discover tour options at www.discoverqatar.qa/tours-excursions, Entalek for kayaking tours and 365 Adventures for a selection of tours.

History
and

arch

It's the scale that hits you first. The buildings appear big, and then you get closer and realise they are bigger. There is amazing architecture everywhere in Qatar, from public museums to skyscrapers and mosques. You don't have to have an interest in architecture to know these are special places.

Many of the city's buildings have been designed by the world's best architects, working in a mix of traditional and contemporary styles.

Qatar's built environment goes beyond its futuristic towers. The country is steeped in history and tradition, which is in evidence everywhere. Grand mosques point skyward and ancient patterns adorn skyscrapers.

Those looking for immaculately preserved, centuries-old buildings will be surprised. Traditionally, buildings in Qatar were rebuilt, remodelled and often abandoned in favour of a new location. But there are many old constructions, particularly outside Doha, hinting at a very different way of life in the not-too-distant past.

nitecture

Ten of the best: Qatar's finest architecture

Just over 40 years ago, the Sheraton Grand Doha Resort & Convention Hotel was the first modern building in Qatar. Now, the skyline is full of architectural marvels. But it's not just scale that leaves an impression. The best architecture doesn't just reach high, it goes deep.

Museum of Islamic Art

Pritzker Prize-winning architect I. M. Pei's Museum of Islamic Art seems to rise from the ocean, reflected in clear water on every side. Pei designed it to incorporate many facets of Islamic architecture. It's severe, but light and warm. Inside, its strong geometric angles give way to curved staircases, high ceilings and Islamic patterns. Standing on reclaimed land out on the Arabian Gulf and surrounded by parklands, it's a focal point in the city.

Al Corniche
+974 4422 4444
mia.org.qa

National Museum of Qatar

A desert rose is a flower-like crystalline formation. Finding one signifies something special—there's water beneath. When French architect Jean Nouvel was tasked with designing the National Museum of Qatar, this is where he found his inspiration. The museum opened in 2019 and tells the story of the country, inside and out. Aside from being unusual and unexpected, the National Museum of Qatar building draws on the country's heritage, signals its ambition and hints at the riches within.

Museum Park Street
+974 4452 5555
nmoq.org.qa

Qatar National Library

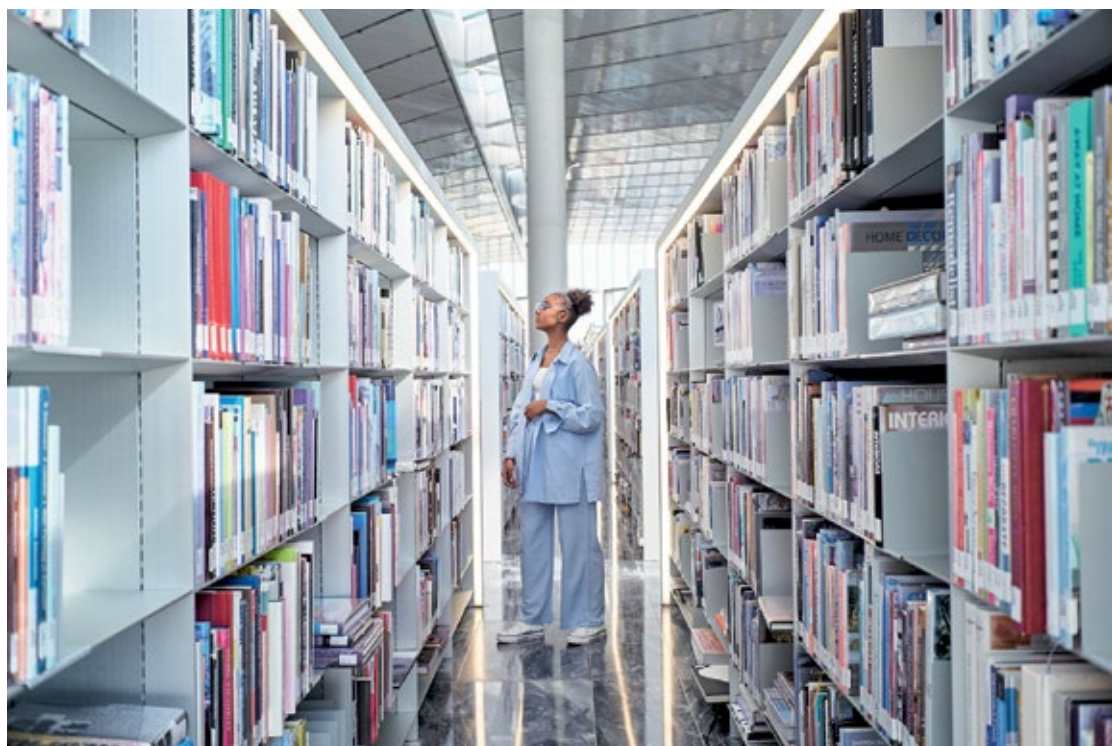
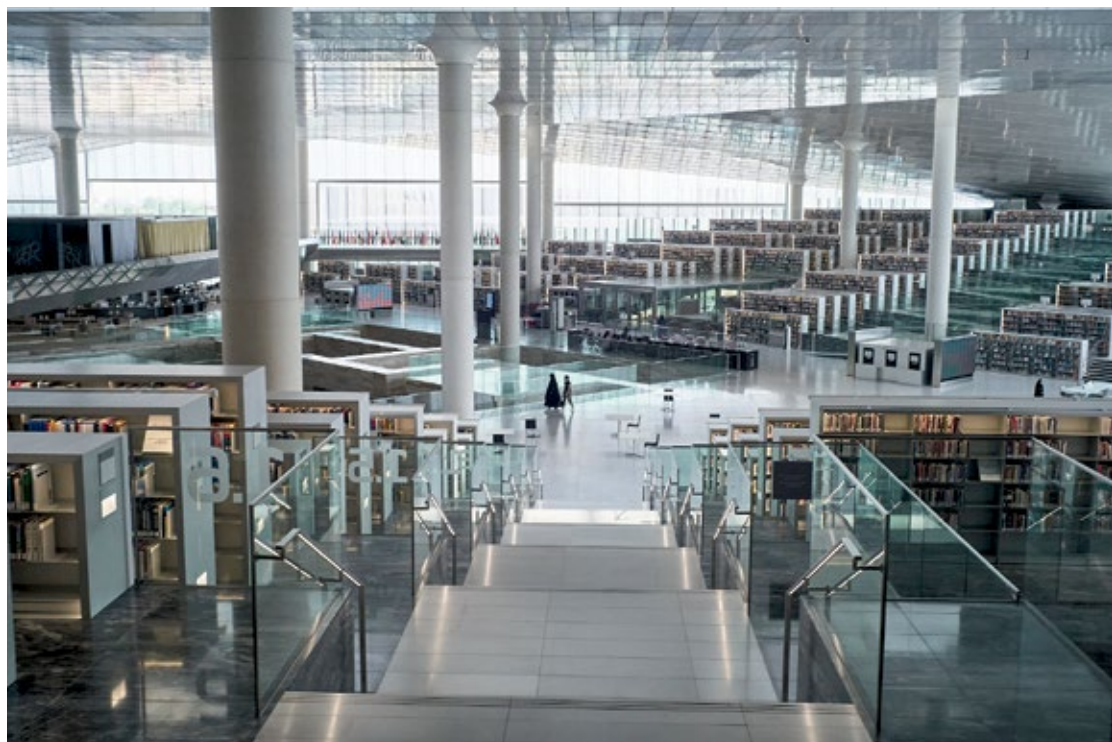
The stunning exterior of Rem Koolhaas' Qatar National Library is an abstract form that recalls the pages of a book, but where it really shines is inside. Gone are the high shelves and narrow, darkened corridors lined with books of the traditional library. Instead, the shelves are staggered along terraces on the outside of a huge, light-filled communal area for reading and study. On a lower level, sunken into the ground, temporary exhibition spaces explore Qatari heritage. This is a modern home for knowledge.

Education City
+974 4454 0100
qnl.qa

Msheireb Downtown Doha

This isn't a single building, but a whole district of over a hundred buildings. Conceived as the world's first sustainable downtown regeneration project, Msheireb's design bucks the trend in Qatar by being pedestrian-focused. Msheireb's streets are lined with wide footpaths, cafes, boutiques and little laneways that you might expect in Europe, but are unique in Qatar. The design responds to the climate to drive its sustainability goals, from the huge number of solar panels on the rooftops to the way the buildings are oriented to maximise breeze from the ocean.

Msheireb Downtown Doha
+974 4000 4000
msheireb.com



The breathtaking Qatar National Library building is impressive both inside and out.

The Grand Mosque

There are many mosques in Qatar, but the Grand Mosque, also known as the Imam Abdul Wahhab mosque, is the largest and greatest. Designed in a mix of Qatari vernacular architecture and contemporary style, the Grand Mosque has space for a congregation of 30,000 and is topped with 99 domes—the number of names for Allah.

Al Mohandiseen Street
+974 4470 0000

Qatar Foundation Headquarters

The Qatar Foundation is the country's centre of scientific research and occupies a prominent place in Education City. Designed by Dutch firm OMA, the building doesn't seek to wow in any conventional sense—it's a 57 m high white cube of pre-cast concrete, with a split partway up that looks as if the top of the building could simply be lifted off. A grid of windows of varying sizes creates a stylised, pixelated image of the Foundation's logo. It looks heavy and solid from the outside, but inside, natural light comes from every pore.

Education City
+974 4454 0000
qf.org.qa

Lusail Stadium

The 80,000 seat Lusail Stadium is the largest of the purpose-built stadiums for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. Visually, it references a 'fanar' lantern, and the intricate patterns and motifs on traditional Islamic bowls. Designed by British firm Foster + Partners, sustainability is at the heart of this design—recycled water will irrigate surrounding new green space, and the roof allows in natural light while supporting the stadium's state-of-the-art temperature control technology. Once the World Cup is over, it'll be repurposed to serve the community, with some seating areas turned into a school, shops and health care facility.

Lusail
qatar2022.qa/en/stadiums/lusail-stadium

Doha Tower

At 238 m, Doha Tower is one of the highest towers in Qatar, though this record changes often. It seems like a smooth, cylindrical skyscraper until you look closer—the whole building is adorned top to bottom with overlapping geometric patterns of interlocking

circles, drawn from ancient Islamic art traditions, which double as protection from the Doha sun.

West Bay

Katara Towers

This awe-inspiring new twin-skyscraper in Lusail is still under construction, but already turns heads. Architecturally, the two towers reference the crossed scimitar swords of Qatar's national coat of arms, but might also remind you of the horns of the national animal, the oryx. At 211 m high, this luxury hotel complex will be a beacon on the Lusail waterfront.

Lusail
katarahospitality.com

Sheraton Grand Hotel

There's a striking photograph of the Sheraton Grand taken shortly after it opened in 1982. It's a lone pyramid on a desert plain by the ocean, with a single road leading to it. Four decades later, it remains a striking landmark, even as new structures tower above it. Designed by American firm William L Pereira, the Sheraton Grand was the start of a development boom that continues today.

Al Corniche Street
+974 4485 4444
marriott.com/hotels/travel/dohsi-sheraton-grand-doha-resort-and-convention-hotel

For more of Qatar's architectural wonders, scan the QR code below.



Education and architecture: Qatar's universities



Looking over the minarets of the Education City Mosque at the College of Islamic Studies.



The entrance to the College of Islamic Studies, Education City.

Doha's Education City district is full of world-class architecture, including its many university campuses, with some of the finest architects in the world mixing classical Islamic architecture, landscape and history with contemporary influences. The whole area (which also includes the Qatar National Library, Education City Stadium and the Qatar Foundation Headquarters) is easily explored on the newly opened tram, by foot or by car.

The most recent addition, completed in 2017, is Northwestern University's Qatar campus, designed by American architect Antoine Predock. The four-storey

building contrasts limestone and metal elements on the façade, recalling desert sands and the tip of a saif (an Arabic sword or dagger).

The College of Islamic Studies (part of Hamad Bin Khalifa University) is Education City's most spectacular building. Designed by British firm Mangera Yvars Architects, the sleek, curved building wraps around shaded gardens and culminates in two dramatic wing-like minarets that reach 90 m in the air. Like the school within, the building is about the ground between education and faith.

The nearby Georgetown University campus, by Mexican architect Ricardo Legorreta, is a monumental, blocky structure rendered in stone, but beyond the façade it has a village feel, with plenty of outdoor space, gardens and sculptures.

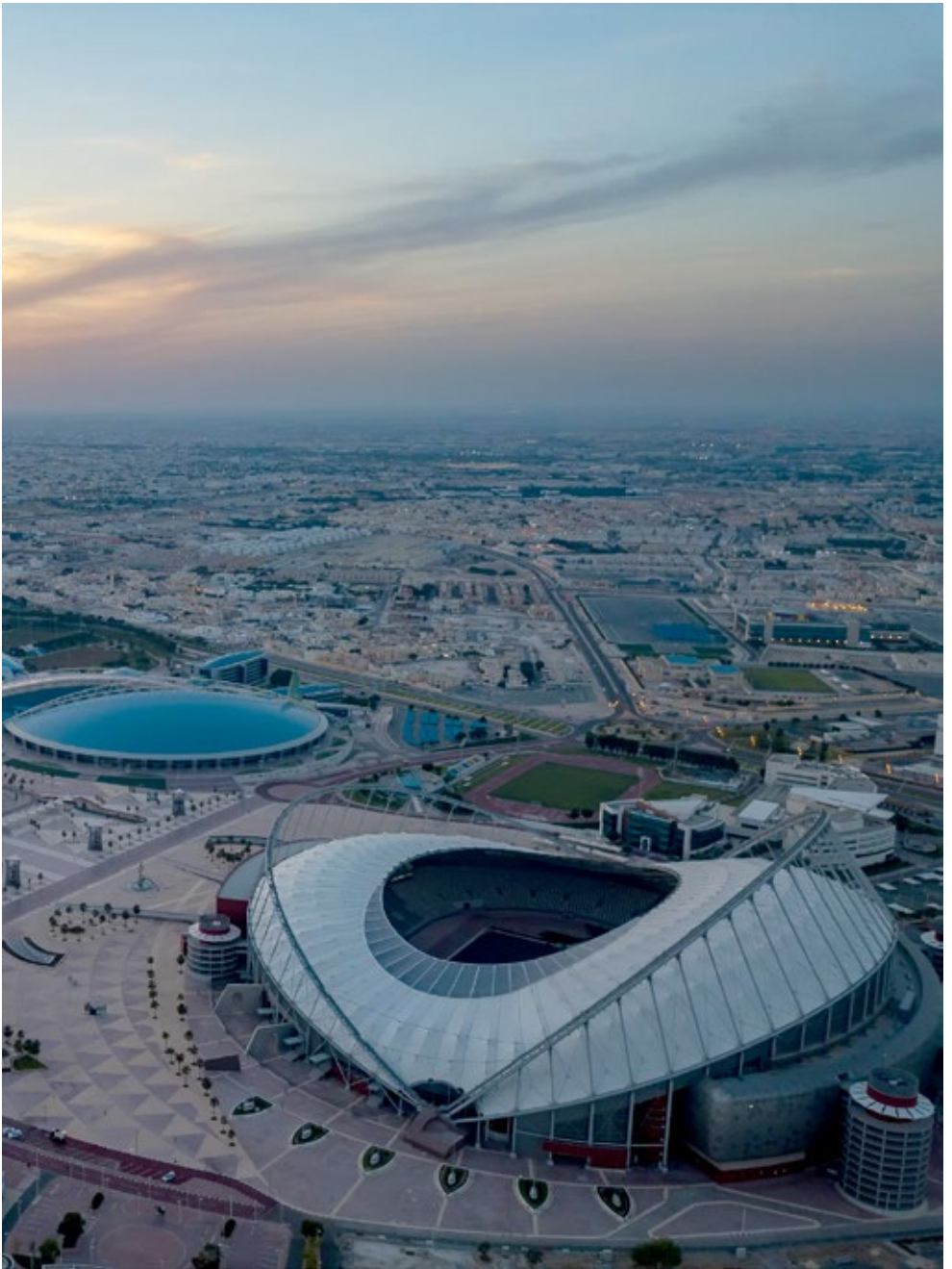
VCUQ (the Qatar campus of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts, based in Virginia, USA) is designed by Doha-based Mimar Group. Evoking traditional Qatari design, it features sand and pink stone broken up by heavy wooden doors, yellow-tinted windows, which reduce the glare of the sunlight, and large marble wall-art by renowned Iraqi sculptor Ahmed Al Bahrani.

And Japanese architect Arata Isozaki's Weill Cornell Medicine Qatar features lecture halls in boldly geometrical shapes attached to the outside of two wide, hangar-like structures.

Culture and technology in Qatar's FIFA World Cup™ stadiums

Lusail Stadium is just one of the eight venues built for the FIFA World Cup 2022™, all of which are feats of architecture and engineering. The stadiums all reflect Qatar's rich cultural history in a contemporary architectural voice. Al Janoub Stadium, for instance, is one of the final works designed by legendary British-Iraqi architect Zaha Hadid. Its curved dome references the sails of dhow ships used for pearling for centuries. Stadium 974 is a sustainably designed and completely demountable structure by Fenwick Iribarren Architects, built from recycled shipping containers which have been cleverly incorporated into the façade. And the Education City Stadium, also designed by Spanish firm Fenwick Iribarren Architects and known as the Diamond in the Desert, is the first of the 2022 venues to receive a five-star rating under the Global Sustainability Assessment System (GSAS).

For a full look at Qatar's eight new stadiums, turn to page 92.



Khalifa International Stadium, home to football in Qatar since 1976, recently refurbished for the World Cup.



Two views of Al Jumail, looking north to Al Ruwais (top) and out over the Arabian Gulf (bottom).

Qatar's historical landmarks

At first glance, Qatar is a country of the future. But there is evidence everywhere of older ways of life, often more recent than you might think. Here are just a handful of sites to visit to get a sense of the country's past.

Al Zubarah Village

If you didn't know it was here, you could drive past the most significant historical site in the country. As many as 6,000 people used to live in the bustling port town of Al Zubarah, living as traders and pearl divers. It was destroyed in 1878 and completely abandoned by the 1930s. Now the ruin, long protected by a layer of sand, has been excavated and the town's story is being told. You'll see homes, fishermen's huts, roads and mosques in evidence. The nearby Al Zubarah Fort was used by the military until the 1980s. Now, it's a museum, and your first stop before you visit the ruins. In 2013, Al Zubarah was listed as Qatar's first UNESCO Cultural World Heritage site.

110 km north-west of Doha

Al Jumail

Though Al Zubarah is arguably more historically significant, the ruins of the fishing village Al Jumail are more picturesque, and the one place in Qatar you can stand and really get an impression how life here once was, even just a few generations ago. Come at sunset for some special views of a town lost to time. We advise caution—some of the walls are unstable.

120 km north of Doha

Al Ruwais

Once one of the most important fishing ports on the peninsula, Al Ruwais is still a working town today, though a decidedly modern one. But there is evidence of its past everywhere,

from the fort-like police station and the historic mosque to the stone fish traps still standing out to sea. Al Ruwais is a great place to visit to learn about the country's history.

120 km north of Doha

Ras Abrouq and Zekreet

Excavations in this beautiful spot in the country's far-west have uncovered over a hundred archaeological artefacts dating back at least 6,000 years, including stone tools, pottery fragments and fish bones. Nearby, you'll find the 19th century ruins of Zekreet Fort, a full-size replica of the fort in its prime, and a series of beautiful limestone rock formations formed by the area's strong winds.

75 km west of Doha

Al Jassasiya

In a remote part of the desert, and not clearly signposted, are the Al Jassasiya rock carvings, which date back around 300 years (though some believe they go back millennia). The carvings are hard to find among the rocks of a former quarry, but the patient are rewarded. You'll find carvings of boats with oars, dot patterns, and animals including turtles, fish and scorpions.

90 km north of Doha

Historic forts

The buildings most likely to survive Qatar's climate and changing lifestyles are the forts dotted around the peninsula—they're built to last, and many now operate as museums. Many are easily accessible, having been absorbed by urban areas, but some are a little further away and you'll need a four-wheel drive to access them.

Right by Souq Waqif, you'll find Al Koot Fort, a remnant of late 19th and early 20th century Turkish occupation. The 19th century Barzan Towers, on the fringe of Doha, were used in the early 20th century as watchtowers to keep an eye out for approaching Ottoman soldiers.

Al Wakrah Fort, in the southern town of Al Wakrah, close to the souq, formerly belonged to the Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, and is now open to the public.

Al Wajbah Fort 15 km west of Doha, is one of the oldest forts in the country and, aside from its significance in the defeat of the Ottomans, it is also a former residence for Sheikh Hamad bin Abdullah Al Thani. The exact age of Al Thaqab Fort, 12 km south of Al Ruwais, is debatable—evidence suggests it dates to the 19th century—but some think it goes back to the 17th century. It was most likely built to guard a nearby well.



There are many historic forts across Qatar.

Hamad International

As you dry your hair after stepping out of the pool, you've got just enough time to hit the Oryx Lounge for a meal and take one last look at the KAWS sculpture before making your way to your gate. In this moment, it's entirely possible that your time in Hamad International Airport (HIA) will have felt too short.

That's because HIA doesn't feel much like an airport at all. It's somewhere between a luxury shopping mall and a leisure destination. Surprisingly, it is the sort of place you might actually want to spend your time at. It's not known as the world's best airport for nothing.

In this issue, as well as exploring the airport's shopping, dining and relaxation spots, we take a close look at HIA's extraordinary sculpture collection, which rivals many international galleries.

Careful—don't miss your flight.

onal

Airport

Why HIA is the best airport in the world

Seen from the air, the gently undulating ceiling of Hamad International Airport is designed to emulate the waves of the nearby ocean, and just as neatly reflects the country's rolling sand dunes just a handful of kilometres south. Beneath these waves, you'll find everything you expect, like shopping, dining and somewhere quiet to sit. You'll also find plenty of things you don't expect, like a gym, sleeping pods, a spa, squash courts, playgrounds and a world-class art collection.

Since opening in 2014, acclaim for HIA has been stacking up. In the annual Skytrax awards (the gold standard for the industry) HIA has won 'Best Staff Service in the Middle East' for five years in a row, 'Best Airport in the Middle East' for six, and most recently, it ascended to the top of the 'World's Best Airport' list in 2021.

With 40,000 m² of food and retail, an internal train between terminals and a carefully-integrated announcement system (the loudest announcement you'll hear is the peaceful call to prayer five times a day), even the standard airport features are a cut above.



KAWS' sculpture *Small Lie* dominates Concourse E at Hamad International Airport.



Above: Outside HIA's departures at dusk.
Left: Engr. Badr Al Meer, HIA's Chief Operating Officer.

A lot goes on behind the scenes to keep this process smooth. Opened in 2014, HIA is a rethink of the typical airport concept. The airport's smooth, quick check-in processes are a result of new digital biometrics technology and a well-designed layout. It all adds up to a frictionless experience that allows the traveller to get on with the business of travelling.

"We've recently entered Qatar's first-of-its-kind research partnership with Hamad Bin Khalifa University's (HBKU) College of Science and Engineering (CSE) to enhance passenger services," says Engr. Badr Al Meer, HIA's Chief Operating Officer. "It's a three-year research programme that will identify ways to enhance HIA's passenger airport experience."

In 2019, before international travel was cut short by the pandemic, HIA saw 38 million people pass through its gates. The HIA team has used the downtime well.

"HIA's staff, at the frontline and beyond, have remained strong and supportive throughout the pandemic, really putting the wellbeing of passengers first," says Al Meer.

"The pandemic and the passenger decline allowed us to catch up to the demand," says Al Meer. "By accelerating our expansion project through the pandemic, we're able to ramp up the passenger experience and offer them something unique through our expansion."

With the return of international travel and the added influx of FIFA World Cup™ visitors, that number will skyrocket to 58 million.

The expanded terminal will house a 10,000 m² indoor tropical garden, a 268 m² water feature, yet more art, more retail and dining, and overall, more for travellers to do.

"We want to foster passenger wellbeing and reduce travel stress during these turbulent times," says Al Meer. "Qatar's airport, with its world-class facilities, hopes to make passengers feel rejuvenated to continue their journey."

For more information on the world's best airport, scan the QR code below.



Art at the airport: The best artworks at HIA

While waiting to board your flight, why not go on an art crawl? HIA works closely with Qatar Museums on its ever-expanding art collection from local and international artists, enlivening the space and enriching travellers' experiences.

The latest addition is *Falcon*, by Dutch sculptor Tom Claassen. "I cannot pick just one piece, but this one is certainly my favourite for now," says Engr. Badr Al Meer, HIA's Chief Operating Officer. "It's a beautifully stylised representation of Qatar's national bird. Inspired by the falcon's soft feathers, the vivid outline of the bird is derived from Arabic calligraphy and mimics the aviation routes from Qatar to the rest of the world."

In the airport's main hall, surrounded by food and retail, you'll find *Lamp Bear*, a huge sculpture by Swiss artist Urs Fischer. It's become something of a mascot for the airport. At 7 m tall and weighing about 20 tonnes, the bronze bear is a playful statement that humanises the space.

You'll find various parts of American sculptor Tom Otterness' series *Other Worlds* dotted all over the airport. These oversized, hollow bronze sculptures double as playgrounds, inviting children and adults to explore the inside of toy-like figures.

Jean-Michel Othoniel's *COSMOS* is a vast tangle of rings representing different travellers' paths. Taking inspiration from the Museum of Islamic Art's prized Brass



Urs Fischer's iconic sculpture *Lamp Bear*, which has become the airport's unofficial mascot.



Tom Claassen's *Falcon* is the latest addition to the airport's art collection.

Planispheric Astrolabe (dating to the 15th century), French artist Othoniel built the piece from steel and gold.

Also on the travel theme, Algerian artist Adel Abdessemed has created *Mappemonde*, a world map made from tin cans collected from market alleys and streets in Dakar, Senegal. The piece takes a local problem and makes it international.

In Concourse E, global pop-art megastar KAWS has contributed *Small Lie*, another flashback to childhood. Made from afrormosia wood, this cartoonish piece is simultaneously melancholic and quirky, dominant and diminutive.

There are many more. You'll find a herd of oryx in the arrival hall (also by Tom Claassen, the Dutch artist behind *Falcon*). British sculptor Marc Quinn presents a fantastical orchid rendered in white bronze with *Arctic Nurseries of El Dorado*. And Anselm Reyle's large sheet of twisted chrome *Philosophy* welcomes you to the Oryx Lounge.

More pieces are being added all the time—keep an eye out for new additions from Keith Haring, Damien Hirst and Jenny Holzer.

Dining, shopping and relaxing: How to spend a day at HIA

You have just a few hours in the world's best airport. Here are some highlights to help you maximise your time.

Shopping and dining at Harrods

London-based department store Harrods has been a leader in luxury retail for over a century. Now you can shop a selection of Harrods products here at HIA. After, take tea in the Harrods Tea Room or the Food Hall.

Luxury at Viale di Lusso

As we've said, HIA often feels more like a scaled-down shopping centre than an airport. The airport's new luxury avenue, Viale di Lusso, was opened in August 2021. Here you can make your airport stopover a memorable experience by browsing or spending the last of that holiday cash at a wide range of outlets, including the first airport Valentino store in the Middle East, Dolce & Gabbana, Fendi, Chloé, Jimmy Choo and Emporio Armani. Elsewhere in HIA, you'll find Burberry, Gucci, Tiffany & Co., Bottega Veneta, Chanel and plenty more.

Duty free at HIA

HIA's range of duty-free is huge, and includes fashion, fragrances, confectionery, electronics, tobacco and more. Be sure to check restrictions and limits on what you can and can't bring into your home country. We recommend picking up some last-minute Qatari specialities, like popular date brands, Qirwan and Bateel.

Dining

Emporio Armani Ristorante and Emporio Armani Caffè, in HIA's Viale di Lusso luxury avenue, are the airport's newest and finest dining experiences, offering high-quality Italian food with Italian-sourced ingredients. Caviar House & Prunier offers the finest raw seafood and caviar to be enjoyed with a glass of bubbles. Le Grand Comptoir is a bustling Parisian brasserie, serving coffee

and pastries. Qataf Cafe is a great spot to stop for mezze style share platters. The recently opened Evergreen Organics offers a wide range of vegan options. And HIA also has an extensive food court, Eat Street, featuring international and Arabic cuisine, perfect for eating on the go.

Relaxation and leisure

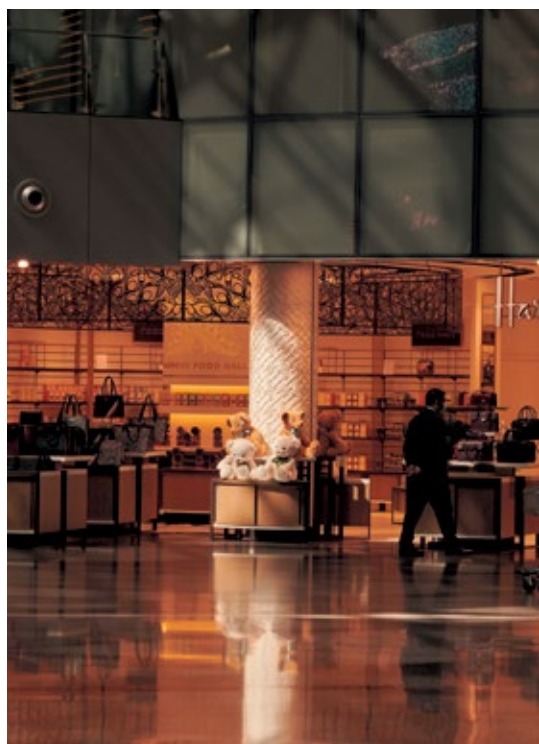
You don't expect to find a wellness facility as comprehensive as the Vitality Wellbeing and Fitness Centre inside an airport. Take a dip in the pool with views over the concourse, get some gym time in, hit the squash courts, or get a massage and a facial. Alternatively, stop off at the Be Relax Spa for a quick massage on the go in Concourse C.

Need some downtime? Not only are there quiet rooms (separated by gender) for a place to sit and rest, but there are also sleep pods. Look out for Sleep 'n' Fly, where you can book in a single or double pod, or a bunk cabin if you want a little more space. Or if you want to spend the night, head upstairs to the four-star Oryx Airport Hotel.

Lounges

If you're lucky enough to be travelling first or business class, HIA has many lounges, including the luxurious Al Safwa Lounge for those in first, with a design (and art collection) inspired by Doha's Museum of Modern Art, and the Al Mourjan and Al Maha Lounges for business class travellers.

The Oryx Lounge is accessible to all travellers for a small fee for up to 6 hours. It offers workstations, multiple dining options and plenty of space to relax.



Four views of Hamad International Airport: Shopping at Fendi, in the airport's luxury shopping row Viale di Lusso (top left); en route to your gate (top right); taking a lap before your connecting flight at the airport's pool (bottom right); and dining at Harrods Food Hall (bottom left).

Go deeper and get social

Qatar is ever on the move. For the latest news, updates and information visit the official Qatar Tourism website, app and socials listed below.

QR codes

Scan the QR codes throughout this publication for even more information on each section.

Website

Connect to visitqatar.qa to explore more.

Visit Qatar app

Download the app for 360° views of popular attractions, and to personalise your trip, create favourites lists, find things nearby and learn more about what's on.



Socials

Follow @VisitQatar on Instagram and Visit Qatar on Facebook for inspiration as it happens. And don't forget to tag us and use #VisitQatar and #LoveQatar for your chance to get featured.



visitqatar.qa